

teacher's pet

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teacher's pet

by [niyuha](#)

Summary

Clay's students were always so concerned with his personal life. It wasn't like he minded, he hardly kept up the professional persona he portrayed to their parents around them. He allowed them to read him like they read his reading assignments. He loved his students, truly.

Until they start inquiring about his odd behavior towards the British computer science teacher in room 297.

Notes

sorry for any grammar mistakes, i wrote this all in one sitting and i have no beta reader

so...tehe

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

words, not numbers

Clay was amazing with words.

English words at least.

When he was young, English was the subject that came easiest to him. He hardly had to put in more than five percent to pass all his elementary and middle school assignments over syntax and Shakespeare. Even in high school, when he was tasked with the more tedious aspects of AP literature and composition, he never felt as if it got any harder for him.

Clay sucked at math though.

If he was held at gunpoint and asked to find the hypotenuse of a right triangle, he'd take the bullet the moment he was shown the problem. The ninety-five percent left of his brain power was used to claw his way through the eighteen math classes he took throughout his academic career. He never knew what the problem was, and to this day he still doesn't know.

All he knew was that he wasn't a math person.

He was an English person.

At sixteen, when asked the question of what he wanted to do, his answer was not too clear. Clay wasn't only academically gifted (excluding the x's and y's pre calculus threw his way), he was also athletically gifted. Football, soccer, baseball, basketball, volleyball...if there was a sport offered to his school, Clay was the frontman of all of them. He had multiple paths to choose when it came to a prosperous future. Colleges lined up with scholarships and promises of full rides to the blond. He had it made, yet for some reason, he couldn't find himself going to school simply for a sport. To him, it felt ridiculous to play into the jock stereotype he was slowly being boxed into. The only thing that kept him from fulfilling it was his love for the books.

Not many people shared his sentiment though.

He always wondered why there weren't more English people out in the world. Writing was fun, reading was fun, it all was simple. So why people picked finding the arithmetic sequence of nth over finding a simile in a piece of literature was beyond him. He didn't want to feel alone in a world that valued numbers over words.

After years of debating and conflicting inputs from others, it hit him. If he wanted more people like him in the world, would just contribute to the creation of English people of the newest generation. Not only would that incorporate his favorite thing in his life, it would also benefit the future. More children enjoying the power of knowledge in a simple form of letters forming into an immersive collection of words was a future that seemed the most ideal to him.

It wasn't a groundbreaking benefit to most, yet when Clay would look at the big picture, he could tell that it would be even bigger than what they were expecting

That was the future Clay wanted to create.

By nineteen, Clay had finally settled on a college. It wasn't like Harvard or Duke, but it was still an achievement to be proud of. After four years of studying English and gaining his teaching degree, at twenty-four, Clay was ready to inspire the new generation with the words of the old. And he did

just that.

Fast forward a few years, Clay was at the ripe age of twenty-seven, only three years after his debut as an English teacher at his old high school. In terms of age, he was one of the younger ones, only being older than the speech and debate teacher Alex by two years. Despite his young age and the small amount of experience he has as an instructor, he was a school favorite. The drama teacher, Wilbur, said it was because he was an attractive blond with a brain, and Clay couldn't argue with that. However, Techno, a fellow young English teacher in Clay's department, says it's because Clay doesn't care much about formalities. Which is true as well.

Clay didn't exactly feel comfortable with having his students address him as some sort of superior. He remembers himself in high school, and he couldn't count the amount of times he wanted to hit a teacher for abusing their power over him. He had a huge issue with authority, anybody close to him could tell you that, so it probably was just Clay he felt talked down upon. And even if it was just that, that still wouldn't change his opinion on the strained relationships most students have with their teachers.

Clay said he wanted to change the future, so he decided to start off small. He introduced himself to his students as his first name and told them to address him as such. If they felt uncomfortable with that, they were allowed to call him by his alias "Dream". In his first year, his students laughed at that, which totally didn't hurt his pride one bit. Yet after a month and half, his students were almost all accustomed to the blond man's policies.

And from there, Clay's popularity and respect as an instructor started to rise amongst the students and faculty. New members to the school would soon be acquainted with the young man, even if they weren't normal students to him, they never missed a chance to go hang out in his classroom when he allowed it.

Clay couldn't ask for anything more.

"Did everyone finish their short answer?"

Green eyes scanned over the heads of twenty sixteen to eighteen year olds. Clay got a chorus of affirmations, watching as heads turned up from the paper in front of him. "Anyone want to share?"

And he's looking at the back of heads again.

He let out a chuckle as he stood up from his desk, joining the floor in front of his students. "Come on guys, don't be shy now. It's only a paragraph." Hushed mumbled in response. "If no one volunteers themselves I'm going to start finding victims." Clay sighed, almost as if he was sad that was even an option at this point.

That seemed to get everyone's attention. No one liked when Clay picked victims, because that just meant double the embarrassment. Yet no one budged.

Clay's eyebrow raised before he turned around to the desk near his own. There sat his teacher's aid, Toby. He went by Tubbo around school and with Clay. He wasn't a part of the other classmates, considering he finished this level last year and now was in Clay's advanced classes that were held later in the day. He just liked Clay's presence a whole bunch, considering Clay to be like an older brother to him after the stressful time he had last year.

"Tubbo, you remember this assignment yeah? Think you could give an example to have everyone

fired up to share?" He asked, a smile gracing his features as he spoke to the younger boy. Said boy was spaced out, only shaking out of his trance after Clay finished his request. "Sorry, I wasn't listening. What did you say?" He asked, a bit more than clueless at the moment.

The rest of the class laughed as Clay just pinched the bridge of his nose, letting out a sigh. "Nevermind Tubbo." He mumbled, watching as his TA just glanced around the classroom, trying to figure out why everyone was now laughing. Just as Clay was about to turn in the direction of the class, to finally start picking his victims, the bell sounded off. "Perfect timing that thing has doesn't it..." He announced to the class, watching as they packed up their materials of this class.

"Don't think this is the end you guys, tomorrow you all will be sharing your interpretation of the text with your commentary. This is gonna help you with your rhetorical analysis in two weeks, so remember, this is for you." He reminded his students, watching as some of them groaned at the mention of their major term assignment. "Dream, you're killing us." One of the guys complained as they walked by Clay. The blond man only rolled his eyes before patting the kid on the back. "That's what I'm paid to do."

Some of the students giggled as they filed out of the room, waving goodbye to the young man as the passing period began. Clay walked back to his desk, sitting in his chair as he watched Tubbo pack his bag. "Again, sorry Dream, I really wasn't paying attention to them. They're your quietest class so it makes it easy just to space out." The youngest apologized, watching as the blond waved his hand. "Nah it's fine, you're not required to pay attention anyway. I just wanted to show them that sharing to the class isn't as scary as people make it seem. It's not like people were gonna start throwing items at them for sharing their thoughts."

"You sure about that? You truly underestimate teenagers these days." Tubbo chuckled as he slung his bag over his shoulder. "These days...you're making me sound so old, Tubbo." Clay complained. Tubbo's brow raised in the direction of his teacher. "Aren't you pushing thirty?" The teen asked. Clay's eyes narrowed. "Aren't you pushing the wrong buttons?"

The tense air that was created then was soon dispersed as the both of them laughed it off, Clay's wheezy laugh creating enough noise to ricochet off the walls of the empty classroom.
"Ah...anyway, don't you have a class to attend? Why are you still here? I'm not being mean or anything." Clay assured. "I'm just waiting for Tommy, we're supposed to go to our computer science class together." Tubbo responded, sitting on the desk in front of Clay.

The older man seemed interested in this statement. "Computer science? Since when have we—"
The blond started before he was cut off by the sound of his door flying open. "Tubbo I'm here!"

Clay knew that accent anywhere.

"Hello Tommy."

The interruption looked in the direction of the teacher, his smile brightening up even more. "Aye! It's Big D! How we doing today, big man?" Tommy asked, walking to be at the side of the other blond. Clay really tried not to laugh at the nickname the younger had given him. He's called him that since Tommy's first class with Clay about a year ago. "I'd be doing a lot better if you stopped calling me Big D." Clay murmured. "Eh, I'll think about it. Anyway, I'm gonna have to steal Tubbo from you, we have to get to class. We're gonna be late."

The boy in question walked up next to the louder boy, his eyes slightly rolling. "The only reason we're gonna be late is because you didn't come at the time I asked you to." He huffed. Tommy's face contorted into that of confusion and annoyance. "Well Tubbo, I had to talk to my brothers on the way here. You know that's how it always is." The taller blond defended himself. Tubbo didn't

seem to care about the excuse. “Yeah yeah whatever.”

Clay watched the interaction from his desk, his smile soft as he did. He remembered seating these two next to each other last year, he never would have thought that their friendship would blossom into something like this. “I can just write you guys a late excuse to give to the teacher of the class if you do end up being late.” He offered. “I’d start writing them now, even if we leave now I know Tommy is still going to have us be ten minutes late because he just needed to bother Techno.” Tubbo sighed, not phased by the strain of odd noises Tommy let out as he processed what his best friend said about him.

“Will do...anyway, Tubbo, you said it was a computer science class? Since when have we had that?” Clay inquired, reaching into his drawer for his pad of sticky notes to write excuses for his favorite students. Tommy seemed to jump at the bait of the conversation. “Uh we’ve had it for a good three months now, my man. Tubbo and I decided to take it together since we both had a free period this hour. The teacher is a proper English gentleman so it feels like a nice safe space for us, y’know.” The blond explained, one hand clutched to his backpack strap as the other moved with his words. “Him being British wasn’t the only reason we took it. It seemed fun as well.” Tubbo butted in.

Clay chuckled, finishing up his signature on the two notes. “The amount of British people in this school is a bit concerning. Where do you guys come from?” He joked, handing the pieces of paper to their respective teens. “England, obviously.” Tommy deadpanned, looking at Clay like he was stupid. Tubbo just let out a snicker, yet tried covering it up with a cough. Tubbo then checked his phone, his eyes going a bit wide from shock. “Well we should get going, the tardy bell is about to ring—“

As if he summoned the noise, said bell sounded off across the school, signaling the two British teens that they were now tardy for their next class. “Oh shit. Tubbo you just had to say something!” Tommy exclaimed as he pulled Tubbo out by the arm. “Well excuse me for remembering the bell schedule!” Was the last thing Clay heard before his door slammed shut. His eyes shifted over to the entrance and shook his head in amusement. He could never get tired of those two.

For the blond man, it was now his conference period. Also known as, his break time. He loved being a teacher, he really did, yet sometimes, he just needed some time to himself. His head laid down on the wooden desk he spent the majority of his life at, eyes closing as he allowed the silence of his room to wash over him.

His thoughts drifted to the conversation he just had with the two boys. This computer science class...they’ve really had it for this long? And Clay knew nothing about it? He figured he would’ve heard talk about a new teacher by now, from his students or fellow teachers, so he just wondered why he hadn’t learned about this until recently. He hoped he would get to meet this “fine English gentleman” as Tommy put it. If Tubbo and Tommy like him, he had to be a good guy. And extremely smart at that. Computer science? Clay could never. Too many numbers. Too much...math.

Clay knew he was amazing with words.

Not math.

size

Chapter Summary

clay's size plays a bigger role in his life than he expects it to

Chapter Notes

once again, excuse grammar mistakes. i wrote this all in one sitting after realizing that people actually wanted this fic to continue so enjoy 3600 words of whatever this. i'll get around to editing it soon but alas

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay had always been on with the taller side for as long as he could remember.

Being the son of a woman who took pride in her height of 5'9" and a man who towered over others at the outstanding height of 6'5", Clay was doomed to experience growing pains that represented the collective genes he was "blessed" with.

When he was five, he already reached the mid of his mother's thigh and the top of father's knee. He easily intimidated his peers by just standing. He was always placed on the back riser during picture day, head always peaking over the smaller six year olds in his class. He was always selected to erase the white board after a lesson because of how long his arm could extend across the flat surface. Everyone's favorite pastime was watching Clay succeed at the monkey bars at recess, tall enough to reach the bars on the very top of the ladder.

By sixth grade, Clay was an inch taller than his mother, surpassing average height by a long shot. Eventually, Clay was just referred to as The Tall Kid. And similar to his height, his popularity continued to grow because of this. Girls would flock to be in his presence, craning their necks to fawn over the empty space between them and Clay. Guys would either complain that he didn't deserve the hype because of his height, or straight up begged him to show them how to grow taller. In fact, his childhood best friend, Nick, was one of those guys. He was one of the more persistent ones, asking Clay to share his height since first grade. To this day, despite standing at 5'10, the man *still* asks Clay to drop the height routine.

Clay didn't have a routine. He was just a tall guy.

At the end of eighth grade, Clay stood at the whopping height of 6'0". By then, he was involved in as many sports as he was allowed to. Actually, he was scouted by the coaches before he even has the chance to debate the idea. That only just garnered the blond even more attention. Even more popularity.

And it wasn't like Clay hated this. In fact, he loved it. Nick started calling him an attention whore after the older man admitted to enjoying the school fame he was gifted. Yet there was still something that bothered him. He wondered if that was all people liked him for, what people stayed around him for. His size. There had to be some logical conclusion to be drawn from it all. He

honestly could look it up on his own, though he didn't know how to explain to his mother why the words "is it okay for people to find me attractive just for my height" were in the search history of the family computer.

The only other source he had similar to the internet was Nick. And though he loved Nick to death, receiving answers from him could leave Clay with more questions than before. Which was exactly what had happened the night before their first day as high school freshmen, when Clay spoke into the darkness of his currently shared bedroom.

"Why is everyone obsessed with my height?"

He thought Nick would be asleep by now, and that theory seemed to almost be proven true from the pregnant silence between Clay's question and the shorter boy's response.

"They find it hot."

Nick seemed to not have a care in the world as he just dropped such a bomb on Clay. As if he was a fish out of water, Clay's lips flubbed, trying to comprehend the bluntness of his friend's words. His body rose up from his side of the bed, looking down at Nick, who just glanced up at the blond. The younger boy's eyes held untreated tiredness as he watched his best friend formulate his response.

"What do you mean?" Clay's question still wasn't answered. At least not in the way that he would've wanted it to be. Nick just let out a loud sigh, his head rolling back as he stared at the green stars decorating Clay's ceilings.

"How dense are you Clay? Have you not noticed the way girls flock to you just to see their height and their difference compared to you?" Nick mumbled before his voice went up an octave. "Oh my god Clay~ You're so much bigger compared to me! Oh my god Clay you can set your head on my head I'm so small! Oh my god CLAY! You're 6'0"!" Clay couldn't help himself but giggle at Nick's horrible impression of the girls who seem to fawn over the blond. Nick seemed to enjoy the reaction he got from his best friend. lips curling up into a small smile. "It's called a size kink or something. Some people just like feeling smaller compared to someone bigger, makes them feel safe or something."

Clay's eyebrow raised at the words Nick used. "Size kink?" Nick just shrugged, pulling some more covers over his body as he turned in the direction opposite of his friend. "I think that's what it is. I don't know. I just heard that word on a show and I think that's what it is." Clay, once again, was just completely lost. Was his popularity tied to sexual attraction? It wouldn't be too surprising to him, considering the age the age he and his peers were at. He wanted more answers yet he could tell from Nick's body language, the boy was dead set on getting some sleep.

However, what kind of best friend would Clay be if he allowed that to happen? The freckled and confused face of the blond soon contorted into one of mischief.

"What type of shows do you be watching, Nick?" He whispered close to the boy's ear. He watched as Nick went rigid at the question, before he completely shot up from his previous position. It was too dark in the room for Clay to tell, but he was pretty sure Nick's face was flushed red. "Not a show like that, perv! Listen, I heard it in a show and I'm pretty sure that's the reason everyone is obsessed with your freakish height. Let's leave it at that."

Clay couldn't help but cackle at his friend's defensive nature, getting a pillow thrown into his face in retaliation.

“Shut up!”

This escalated into a whole pillow fight, the boys wrestling onto the floor until Clay’s mother came to remind the boys that they had their first day of high school in less than seven hours.

It took awhile but the boys were able to settle down for the night, Nick being the first to succumb to the moon’s lullaby. Clay’s experience wasn’t as easy, may it be nerves or their conversation from before, Clay didn’t know.

Size kink...what a weird way to say you like someone’s size compared to you. Per usual, Clay’s mind was plagued with questions.

He wondered if it was only possible for a girl to experience something like that. To like the idea of having someone proportionally different to you. Did guys have size kinks? And if they did, was it only for girls smaller than them? Were they able to have them for anyone? His intense thinking must’ve been the thing to lull the blond to sleep, because the next thing he remembered was being shaken awake by his best friend to start their new lives as high school freshmen.

“So I told Tommy that he couldn’t just storm into the black box when he felt like it, and suddenly I’m coined as the worst brother in the world. I just don’t like the brat breaking my props!” Clay only snicker as he listened to the rants of the disgruntled drama teacher, Wilbur Soot. Commonly known as Mr. Soot by their students. “Isn’t he ridiculous!?” The brunette continued, looking to the blond for an affirmation. “Yes, yes he is. But that’s Tommy for you. You should know that better than anyone else.” Clay supplied, flipping through another one of his student’s assignments before handing them Wilbur.

For this week’s prompts, he had asked them to write about a moment in their life as a Shakespearean play, Old English and all. And though he was good at the word part of Shakespeare, he barely could be the judge of how good the drama part could be. So here he sat in Soot’s office, legs propped against his desk, as he allowed the older man to help provide critiques for Clay’s students. “Yeah I know...Just gets annoying having to convince him biweekly that I don’t hate him, I just want respect.” Wilbur murmured, finishing up one of his critiques. Clay looked up at the British man, his smile as soft as he provided a bit of advice. “He’s seventeen, he’ll grow out of it eventually. He’s just in that hating authority phase, old man.” Clay snickered, watching as Wilbur kicked the heel of the blond’s shoe. “Asshole, I’m only thirty.”

Clay shrugged as he set down his papers, allowing himself to stretch in the seat he was given. He’s been here since the end of school, orange rays of the setting sun peeking into the office of the theatre teacher. “Holy shit...I feel like if I read anymore I might start speaking in Old English...” He groaned, his fingers rubbing into his emerald eyes, an attempt to relieve the tension there. “It’s actually not as bad as you may think, if people back in the day were able to understand this with hardly any help, I’m sure you can too. .” Wilbur hummed, pen tapping against the edge of his desk, proofreading the lines in front of him.

The blond rolled his eyes, sitting back in his chair the way he was before. “Says the one who does only that for seven hours a day.” Clay murmured. Wilbur looked over the rim of his glasses at the younger man. “Don’t you teach this and only this for at least six weeks? And didn’t you go to

school for this specifically?" He questioned, eyebrow quirked towards the freckled man. His lips soon curled into a smirk when he realized Clay had no comeback to his question, scoffing quietly as he went back to his work. "That's what I thought."

Clay sometimes wondered why he signed himself up for certain situations, knowing full well that he was just going to regret it in the end. Maybe he was a masochist, especially when it came to his job. And the people he interacted with at said job.

Clay tried to focus back on the work in his hands. yet he just couldn't. He wasn't lying when he said he would start speaking this old language soon. He could *feel* his brain overwriting itself. He needed more than just that tiny break, deciding it was time to start staring at the decorations that littered Wilbur's walls.

Similar to the man, Wilbur's walls were eccentric. Though that probably came with being a drama teacher, the older man's office wasn't only decorated in playbills and theatre decor. This was a bit of Wilbur's personal life told through little trinkets and photographs hidden amongst the other clutter. It seemed like every time Clay blinked, there was something new to point out or discover. He hung out with Wilbur a lot in his classroom, especially in his office, yet somehow Clay couldn't remember the room even if he tried to. Yet Clay liked that about Wilbur and his office. It was chaotic in a weirdly sophisticated way.

As Clay continued to scan the room, his eyes fell on the bulletin board behind Wilbur's down casted head. The bulletin board was the one thing that almost never changed. Instead of using it for something important regarding work, the board acted as a scrapbook. There were multiple pictures of the man with his brothers, fellow English teacher Techno, and class nuisance, Tommy. Of course there were photos of their father as well, who seemed to look (and act) the most normal out of their family. There were also some pictures of Wilbur and his friends. Clay was featured on the board more than a few times, being one of the people close to the older man outside of work. There were several pictures of Wilbur and his high school buddy, Schlatt, who complimented yet contradicted Wilbur in the best way. A young woman, one of Wilbur's college friend who went by Niki, also was a huge part of this posted scrapbook. Almost everybody on the board was someone Clay knew just as well as Wilbur, besides one.

In the far corner closest to Wilbur's desk, there were a few pictures of Wilbur, accompanied by a younger (and smaller) man. From where Clay was sitting, he could exactly tell all the details of this man besides the obvious. He was pretty close to Wilbur, being featured on the board was enough to confirm that. But from the pictures of the two, their smiles showed a type of love that was platonic, yet sweet. It reminded Clay a lot of Nick and his relationship.

"Who is he?"

Clay questioned, pointing at the board behind the British man. Wilbur, who was completely immersed in his own grading world, looked up at the blond man, confused. "Who?" His eyes followed the pointed finger until he saw the target. His eyes widened a bit before he smiled. "That's George. One of my other good friends from high school." He explained. Clay nodded at the answer, retracting his hand as he set it back in his lap. "George? His name sounds British." The blond teased. Wilbur's smile soon dropped so his face reflected his disappointment. "A name can't sound British, Clay. But if it matters, he is indeed British. One of the only other British guys at our high school." Clay let out a small noise of understanding. "It was like it was fate you guys met or something. British boy solidarity."

Wilbur snickered. "I guess when you put it that way. Maybe it was meant to be." The theatre teacher then stopped, seemed to be deep in thought before his brow furrowed. "Wait, are you sure you haven't seen George before?" He asked. Clay seemed just as confused at the question. "Uh what do you mean? He was never on your board until recently." The blond stated. "Only because he complained he wasn't on it. But I'm not talking about that." The older man waved his hand dismissively before focusing on the English teacher. "Clay, he works here at the school."

The blond's eyes widened, seemingly shocked at this revelation. "Really? Since when!?" How come Clay hasn't heard of this new British teacher. "Um since like three months ago. He's the new computer science teacher." Wilbur chuckled at the other's reaction, legs crossing as he continued. "Tommy knows him, I'm surprised he hasn't talked your ear off about him."

He had back tracked his brain to a few weeks ago, the when he had the conversation with Tubbo and Tommy regarding the new computer science teacher. He could vaguely remember that Tommy did mention this dude was British. Considering the amount of British people who worked in this school, the blond hardly batted an eye at the description. He didn't know why he couldn't put two and two together until now. "He mentioned him maybe like once, when he was making Tubbo and him late to the guy's class." Wilbur scoffed, eyes rolling at his brother's antics. "Not surprised..." He grumbled

The blond leaned back into his chair now, dumbfounded by this discovery. "I'm shocked you don't remember him, though. He's told me you've guys met before." Wilbur provided, Clay seeming to perk up at that. "He has?" He murmured. "I don't remember meeting him."

Wilbur sighed, looking up at the ceiling before looking towards the English teacher. "Well to be fair, you called him a kid." Clay was even more confused now. "I did?" Okay now you have to tell me how we met because I straight up remember nothing of this." He explained, watching as Wilbur seemed to try to stifle his laughs.

With careful eyes, Clay watched as Wilbur sat down his notes and stack of essays, fixing the glasses that threatened to fall off the tip of his nose. He then began his storytelling.

"Okay well according to George, his first week here, he was walking down the halls rather quickly to get to his own classroom. Apparently he was making copies in the library and forgot about his next class. And since he was just speed walking across the campus to get to his class, he wasn't paying attention and ended up running into something. He then found out that something was a someone, and in his words "their chest was as hard as the wall itself.", Wilbur started, head propped up against his fist as he maintained eye contact with Clay. "Turns out that person was you. He remembers you being "freakishly tall" and buff, and he thought you were going to kick his ass for running into him. But instead of that, you just smiled and went "You alright, kid?". Wilbur seemed to deepen his voice dramatically as if to imitate the younger man in front of him.

Clay just blinked in disbelief, trying to remember back to this moment. Yet he ended up drawing a blank. Wilbur continued on. "He said he ended up so embarrassed from everything in this interaction, but being called a kid by a fellow faculty member was the most embarrassing part of it all. And now he says it's even *more* embarrassing now that he knows that you're younger than him and still mistook him for a kid. He knows you meant no harm but, he has always been one insecure of his height so you just ended him with a critical hit."

Clay just continued to listen to Wilbur's story, simultaneously finding it hilarious and embarrassing. "Damn, how short is he that I confused him for a teenager...?" Clay questioned, covering his mouth as he just allowed his brain to process it all. "He just hit 5'9" and he's about to turn thirty so...yeah..." Wilbur winced, watching as Clay "coughed" into his hand. The taller

man's lips quirked up in a small smile, stretching his body as he finished up his story. "Anyway, you've met George, and George has met you. You just don't know him." Wilbur soon looked back at the blond, an apologetic smile now present on his features. "And don't worry, he doesn't hate you because of that or anything, but if you do try talking to him, I promise you that he might be a bit sassy. He has a bit of an attitude problem, especially toward people bigger than him." The older man warned.

The blond wanted to laugh.

A 5'9" man with an attitude problem?

For some reason, Clay seemed intrigued at the thought of such a person. "Well, I feel like I need to apologize to him eventually. Is he still at the school right now?" The younger man asked, finger tips beating against one another as he anticipated a response. Wilbur looked over his shoulder at the analog clock behind him, lips forming into a thin line as he spoke again. "It's pushing six, so I doubt that. George tries getting out of here as quick as possible so he can go to sleep." Clay let out a soft chuckle at the thought. That's definitely something he could relate to.

Wilbur then turned back in the direction of the blond. "He'll be here tomorrow, obviously. I think he has the same conference period as you actually, so maybe you can talk to him tomorrow?" The man had suggested, now slightly spinning in his desk seat as he awaited a response

Clay's smile reached his face before he could rationalize it. "I will. If you don't mind, what's his room number?" The blond questioned, watching as Wilbur leaned his head up in thought, his spinning motions halting for a moment.

"Uh...I'm pretty sure it's Room 297...yeah it's Room 297. It's down the hall from the speech and debate room." Wilbur pointed in the general direction of the rooms he was referring to, watching as Clay stored this piece of information into his mind. "Alright...I'll go talk and apologize to Mr. George tomorrow at 1pm. Hopefully he'll be nice about it." The blond mumbled. Wilbur let out a tiny giggle, folding his hands together as he watched Clay's face exhibit signs of mild distress. "Don't worry. George is just sassy, he's not going to curse your first born child for a misunderstanding."

"I'm holding your word to that, Soot." Clay warned. The older man just shrugged. "Okay, and I stand by my word. You have nothing to worry about." Wilbur promised, once again, trying to ease the worry from the blond. "Anyway...I think I've grown to hate this place and this teacher work for today. Want go grab some dinner then head off on our own?" The British man suggested, standing up from his seat to pop the slight pain in his back. Clay soon joined him, rising up to his full height, only to be met with Wilbur's chin.

"As long as you're paying." He sighed, gathering his student's work and placing it in his folders. "Yes, of course. Is pizza alright?" Clay was asked, responding while Wilbur was shutting off the lights. "If it's Pizza Hut pizza, then yes." Clay was soon escorted out of the room with Wilbur in tow, locking it up as he followed out of the building with the blond. "Fine by me."

With one last test of the lock, the two men headed out for their dinner "date", the conversation from before forgotten about by Wilbur. Yet the entire time Clay was stuffing his face with gentrified Italian food, his mind kept straying to his meeting with the infamous computer science teacher, George.

Or the teacher Clay had met once, yet never remembered.

Clay would think about the story he was told later that night, chuckling at the ridiculousness of it all. God was he so dumb. Was this George guy really that small that Clay confused him for another teenager? Or was Clay so big that he forgot people below the height of 5'10" could be older than sixteen? Either way, his size once again comes into play and ends up being the reason a possible relationship has been formed. A complicated relationship that remained not quite completed, yet not quite started either.

Clay liked having close relationships with his colleagues, if anything those relationships make his job even better than it already is. Yet for some reason, as green eyes were being shielded behind heavy eyelids, Clay had hoped this relationship could be just a bit different than that.

A bit...bigger, perhaps.

Chapter End Notes

best way to spend your birthday: writing fan fictions about men 4-7 years older than you

no but today is my birthday so i decided to gift you guys the second chapter of this fic. i know i'm so sweet. but honestly, thank you all for the support on the first chapter. i didn't expect it to pick up traction the way it did. i hope you guys continue to enjoy it as it continues!

any type of support is lovely <3

boys

Chapter Summary

clay and george finally meet

Chapter Notes

this is the longest chapter of the fic so far (this fic is only three chapters long atm but whatever). 5,500 words of clay having a type when it comes to guys. excuse grammar mistakes and whatnot, i'll fix em when i have my beta reader awake <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

American culture thrived around health, beauty, money and sex. Whether you find yourself on the society desired side of the coin or not, it was stupid to not believe that these ideals were what modern USA had upheld. From a young age, the “American Dream” was shoved down the younger generation’s throat through exposure to the media in some way.

Almost every cartoon that was portrayed to kids depreciated happiness through a happy mother and father with a group of children living in a two story home in the nice part of town. In some way, it was propaganda of some sort but children that age didn’t even know a third of the english words adults knew, so it flew directly over their heads.

In Clay’s opinion, this pushed their society back down a few pegs.

The blond, similar to other people of his generations, was blind to the agenda that was pushed onto them. That in order to be happy, you had to fall in love in high school and start a family as soon as time allows. Not only was that ideology flawed in many ways, it was very heteronormative. Clay couldn’t think of one show that he was allowed to watch that pottayed a relationship between two members of the same sex or gender that wasn’t made to be a joke in some way.

And Clay was certain that was the reason he was so late to his own self discovery journey.

Despite contrary belief, relationships never came easy to Clay. One might wonder what this reason could be, especially when they take into consideration that Clay is the textbook definition of a perfect boyfriend. Tall, charismatic, athletic, popular, loyal....amongst the other hundred traits he had to his name. But it wasn’t his traits that prohibited Clay from satiating his hopeless romantic soul, and it definitely wasn’t the lack of interest from willing bodies.

Instead, it was the lack of interest from Clay towards said bodies.

To him, almost all of his admirers were similar. Fellow peers of his popularity status, small in build and stature, athletes of some sort, and most importantly; they were all female.

For some reason, the fact that his options were limited to just girls was the biggest turn off in Clay’s mind. That should’ve been the biggest red flag to the blond that he was different from the

rest of his male classmates, but he could be a bit dense.

Now, Clay wasn't blind, women were beautiful. He could look at a pretty girl and recognize that she was indeed pretty. And he knew that the girls who wanted him were well in his range for attraction, but as a developing man in high school, he wasn't sure if he could be satisfied with *just* a woman. At the time he thought he was broken, because what guy didn't like the thought of being with a woman for the rest of their lives?

Most guys his age just called him a prude, or blamed it on the girls being too much of a "whore" for someone of Clay's caliber, yet Clay didn't let it bother him. Well, except for the slut shaming, he never was okay with that. Other than that, Clay was well alright with being the popular guy who had yet popped his dating or crushing cherry.

Until junior year.

Clay could remember the moment so vividly. It was the last game of the football season, and Clay had just scored the winning touchdown for their team, sending them straight to state for the first time in school history. The stadium was booming with energy of all sorts, shock and excitement giving the electric energy powering the stadium a run for its money. It was like you could see science weaving its magic through the molecules of the air. Clay felt his lungs burn from exertion, from both his running and his shout of victory once he landed in the promised land that was the touch down goal of American football. His lungs couldn't seem to take a break, barely having a moment's rest before gearing into overtime once Clay's body was tackled by fellow celebrating teammates.

Clay couldn't believe it. The team couldn't believe it, the coaches, the fans. No one could wrap their head around the then eighteen year old securing their spot to play at one of the highest levels of play that was achievable for high school football. Clay didn't think anything could make this moment better.

After a long congratulations given by coaches and parents alike, the team was allowed to clean up and leave to go change out of the sweat soaked uniforms.

On the way back, Clay was still smothered and smacked into the next reality from overexcited teenage boys. Clay couldn't feel it though, adrenaline protected his nerves from feeling anything more than a small impact shot.

The energy from the field seemed to carry into the locker room, buzzing amongst the sea of boys like an electric surge. Several of them were letting out more shouts of celebration to beat of metal lockers that were being hit upon. From all the hot bodies and breath, the locker room felt stuffier than normal, at least to the quarterback. He couldn't find it in himself to care though. The only thing he cared about was getting undressed. He was excited as hell at what had transpired, but he really wanted to go some place from the school. Clay was focused on getting out of the second skin he had developed during the game to pay attention to any of the conversations surrounding him. He only found out what was going on after a teammate screamed in his ear the spontaneous plans the guys had.

Most of the team demanded that there be a team dinner the night of victory, saying that this year was one for the books. Hyped up on adrenaline and testosterone, collective yeses were shouted out.

Clay of course agreed, finding it ridiculous for him not to join in on the festivities when he's the cause of them. But after that, he went right back to undressing and redressing himself for the established dinner. During that time, Clay took the time to soak in what had just happened. He couldn't believe that he, this 6'3" kid from a small high school in Orlando, was able to make history like this. Any time he tried to wrap his head around it, his brain would make him remember something else great about the moment, having to restart the VCR tape of memory again to include that specific detail. Every rendition was amazing.

He must've been out of it for a while, because he was soon tapped on his shoulder. His body shook back into reality, turning around so he faced away from the locker he was staring into. His green eyes blinked quickly, before the searched for the source of the disturbance. They had to be angled down so they could be focused on a smaller man.

Clay felt his breath stop for a moment.

"Clay, is it alright if I ride with you to the team dinner? My sister dropped me off to this game since my car is in the shop and I'd much rather ride with you than the other guys." The guy chuckled, a small smile gracing his features.

Clay felt his heart shatter his rib cage.

What's going on with me?

The blond knew this guy, he'd be rather ignorant if he didn't. His name was Matthew, yet he went by Matt for the boys on the team. He wasn't a player of the team, anyone could come to that conclusion by just looking at him. He was the coach's right hand man and the team's water boy. If the blond remembered correctly, he was older than Clay, by like a year or so, but his height didn't seem to reflect that in the slightest. He reached up to Clay's jaw on a good day. His black hair was middle parted, the longer parts slightly stuck to his forehead due to basking in stadium lights for the past four hours. His large eyes matched his hair, pupils unable to be distinguished from the surrounding color. His skin was tanned just a bit, but Clay could tell that the boy wasn't a fan of Floridan sun. Sun kissed, but if the kiss was just a gentle peck from the sun's gold rays.

The one thing Clay couldn't stop looking at, weirdly, were Matthew's lips. They weren't anything too jaw dropping, but the way the boy's bottom lip was slightly jutted out in the kind smile had the quarterback enamored.

Clay realized in this moment that he never really acknowledged Matthew that much, or had taken much more than a glance in his direction. Because he would've been a fool to forget such features on a man. At the same time he came to that conclusion, his mind drew up another;

Damn, he's pretty.

Eventually, Clay could feel himself staring. It didn't take a genius to find that one out. But when the quarterback snapped out of the mini trance he was in, he noticed that the other boy didn't seem to do such a thing. He then remembered that he was asked a question. He felt even more awkward when he forgot to respond in a reasonable amount of time. "Oh, yeah. That's fine with me." The

younger boy supplied, closing his locker once he broke eye contact with the elder.

The water boy sighed in relief, letting out another small chuckle. Clay's heart fluttered in time with the breathy laugh. "Oh thank god, I don't think I could survive a car ride with Rylen and Jake." He stated, a hand coming through his slightly damp hair as he spoke to the football player. Clay's eyes couldn't help but follow the motion. "I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy, why would I allow you to go through that?" Clay replied back, watching that smile from before grow into one of amusement. "Thank you Clay, a true gentleman." The hand that was once in the elder's hair now rested on Clay's shoulder, raising up to pat the rounded bone.

If that was anybody else's hand, Clay was sure he would push it off, claiming it to be dirty from sweat and muck. Yet the blond couldn't care less when it came to the water boy.

"I know...anyway. I'm ready whenever you are?" Clay suggested, finding his keys in his gym bag as the waterboy stepped a bit closer to him. "I'm ready. Let's go before the guys start acting a fool." Matthew hummed, walking next to his ride with a slight skip in his step.

Clay couldn't help but watch.

Later that night, after dinner was done and over with, Clay was responsible with giving Matthew a ride home. He obviously had no qualms with it, for his stupid heart couldn't seem to get a grip on reality the entire dinner. Green eyes met brown almost every five minutes. And every time they did, a smile was soon to follow after. Clay swore he felt like throwing up every time it happened. And not in a bad way. But in a good way.

As if that made any sense to anyone besides Clay.

Clay didn't know what this feeling was. And he didn't know why he started feeling this after being left alone with a guy, nonetheless. He wanted to blame it on the excitement from winning the game before, yet his brain even knew that wasn't the case. He started thinking he was coming down with something, like a stomach bug or whatever, but that couldn't explain his heart fluttering when Matthew said he wanted Clay to drive him home after the dinner. And it definitely didn't explain his heart pounding when Matthew gave him a hug before he left Clay's passenger seat.

Present day Clay would love to slap the shit out of seventeen year old Clay for not realizing that what he was feeling was the development of infatuation. For it wasn't until college that the the blond acted upon his feelings for pretty boys with pouty lips. For it wasn't until college where Clay had realized; he liked boys.

And he couldn't help be indulge in that

His weeks at school would consist of grueling college courses and three hour long football practices. His grades never slipped beneath a C+ despite his challenging schedule. The blond figured he might have gotten B+'s and above if he spent his weekends to study Latin or college algebra to its fullest extent. However, he couldn't do that. He had a lot more pressing matters to deal with on those days.

Instead of being tangled up with homework and study guides, Clay's weekends were spent tangled up in the sheets with older, *tinier*, men who were well okay with a college football player taking them for a night or two.

And it was like that almost every weekend for the the four years Clay could afford at his school. During this time, he was known as a playboy, horn dog, man whore, etcetera. And of course there were people who congratulated him on his sex drive and efforts. None of that mattered to the

blond. He was just making up his self suppression and lack of experience he had during high school.

And all the boys he'd been with were just too pretty to not indulge in. He'd be a fool to not take up on any opportunity they gave him to completely ravage them.

Boys weren't the only thing Clay was into though. Since it was his sexuality journey, He had his fair share of girls he spent his special weekends with. He even had committed relationships with some of them. But something about having a little boyfriend who had a mouth riddled with sin, and a soul pure as fresh snow, was something Clay couldn't help but chase after.

Despite this, Clay never labeled himself though. He was well okay with just doing whoever he liked with out having to think about a technical term for it.

All he knew was that he liked boys

If anyone heard the blond's explanation as to why boys were his preferred lover, they might say he loved them.

Clay couldn't find it in him to disagree

Clay was nervous.

Whether it be a good nervous or a bad nervous, the blond couldn't seem to figure that out.

He just knew he was nervous.

He was walking amongst a sea of wavering heights and ages, hands in pocket as he strolled down the large halls of the school.

Today was the day that Clay was going to meet the infamous computer science teacher in Room 297.

Or the teacher that Clay had mistook for a student in their first meeting.

Clay was well aware that it was his conference time, and was aware that it should be his target's conference period as well. If what Wilbur said was indeed true. He doubted the theatre teacher would lie to Clay about something like this, yet at the same time...it was Wilbur. This man caused chaos just to have a laugh.

The blond was trying his hardest to not walk quickly due to the anxiety coursing through his veins, his long legs were already cutting the trip time in half. He didn't need to be bolting in the general direction of this man's classroom.

The entire night before, though Clay fell into a deep slumber, the blond's thoughts had been plagued on how this meeting would go. He, of course, didn't know this guy personally in any way, shape, or form, so he based all his assumptions off of what he was told by Wilbur in the office. And from those assumptions, Clay had devised two possible scenarios that could happen from this interaction.

Scenario one; Clay enters the classroom of the mysterious and short computer science teacher of Room 297 and apologizes profusely for not being more observant of the staff in the school. He then introduces himself to this teacher, the other reciprocates the action and all is resolved. Clay isn't hated by a member of faculty and ends up with a nice new acquaintance, and possible friend, in the school.

That was Clay's favorite scenario, in fact he preferred if that was the one that ended up happening in the end. Clay was a bit of the optimist (he actually gained the "optimistic bastard" title from Alex after Clay was invited as a example debate partner for the other's class a year ago), so he didn't think that his possible second scenario was needed, but alas...he's only human. He had to have a negative somewhere. And in the English major's mind, it went as followed;

Scenario two: Clay completely fucks everything up and gets hated on by this computer science teacher in Room 297 for the rest of the time he ends up teaching at this high school.

On top of being an extreme optimist, somehow, Clay was also capable of being an extreme pessimist. Whenever he thought of anything bad, it was the complete worse. Sometimes, his speculations on how terrible something would end up starts borderlining on the line between reality and the fucked up fantasy the blond was able to conjure up in his mind. If no one knew he was an English major from the degrees and his current profession, the wild extremes this man went to could only belong to that of a English kid.

His eyes were scanning the multiple room numbers that he passed back, trying to spot the one he needed to go to. As he walked by these classrooms, he started to question the validity of the current situation he was in. He knew almost all these classrooms by heart, or at least had visited these classroom's teachers on more than one occasion, so why was it that he hadn't heard of this guy in those times he was here?

Having a thought like this started making the blond show down in walking, thoughts now were the ones running at a tremendous speed. Was this George guy even interested in the whole befriending your coworkers idea? Was he this hermit that no one but the students and Wilbur knew of? Was he even a good person outside of the work persona he had to use in this school? The more steps Clay took in the direction of his desired location, the more questions flooded his mind.

Then suddenly they stopped.

The bell signalling wandering students that they were going to be tardy went off above Clay, the pull from reality that he needed out of his head. He had a tendency to do that he had no reason why. Why was he set on psyching himself out of any possibly good thing in his life? The self sabotaging had to stop at some point, he figured.

But was it really self sabotage if he was truly scared of what was to happen if he did meet this guy?

He shook his head with a groan. Why was he giving himself a therapy session in the middle of an empty hallway. He had a job to do.

Looking around his surroundings, Clay has noticed that he had gotten to the end of the hall. He doesn't think he's been down this far in the campus in a while, at least not since the last time he hung out with Alex on school premises. The area looked similar to the English wing, maybe a bit

darker due to the blown out ceiling light the school refused to fix. But besides that, it had the same white tiles layering a path onto the concrete below it, brick and white walls giving support and sections for the rooms of the area, and heavy brown doors with a sliver of glass to act as a window.

The only thing different were the room numbers.

Clay's eyes scanned the wooden blocks nailed into the stone next to its designated door, hoping to land on his desired number.

294...295...296...

297

Bingo.

Clay turned his body to face his current holy grail, legs moving to get closer to read the text beneath it.

ROOM 297

GEORGE DAVIDSON

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Clay couldn't help but snicker.

What a British sounding name.

The blond took a moment to compose himself as he reached for the door handle. Yet he stopped himself. The reality of this situation finally dawned upon him. Clay, on his own accord, decided that he was going to be apologizing to this guy. Yet said guy had no clue that he was doing this, or that Clay was even outside his door at the moment. The blond had to fight the urge to not let out the loudest groan of his life.

His mother had always commented on the English major's inability to look at any minor detail of a plan. He always seemed to oversimplify it in favor of the idea going through in the way that the blond wanted it to. Again, that blind optimism could one day put Clay into a situation positive affirmations couldn't fix.

The blond just stared at the hand hovering over the curved piece of metal that separates him from the man of his thoughts. As if it had been set on fire, his hand retracted back to his side. Him just walking in would be ridiculous. He had never formally met the guy yet here he was acting like they had been colleagues for years. He didn't know what was becoming of him. He was just going to blame it on the nerves. Clay needed to take a different approach, a more professional one.

The hand from before decided to take the shape of a fist, before rising up to knock against the wood in front of it. Clay felt his heart drop to his stomach, beating wildly where it had lay. He finally made the connection, there was no backing out now.

In the (very long) silence between Clay's knock and the computer science's teacher's response, the blond has shoved his hands in his pocket. He could feel beads of sweat from between the creases of lines in the calloused skin. It was if he dipped his hand in a bucket of saline solution.

God, why am I so nervous?

At that moment, Clay decided to debate the concept of time itself. The knock couldn't have happened more than ten seconds ago, but to the blond, it felt as if he lived through five more generations standing still in his spot in front of this damn door.

He wanted to just turn on his heel and haul ass out of this hallway before the teacher could spot him. However, before his body was able to react to that thought, the door before him started to creak open.

Well, now he *really* couldn't back out now.

Little by little, as if the door was trying to punish Clay for even having the *thought* of leaving, the English teacher was getting closer to seeing the man of the hour.

He was expecting a face of British confusion to be the first thing he was met with. What he didn't expect was to be met with the top of mop of brown hair being the home to a pair of round rimmed glasses.

“Hello?”

The voice came from underneath Clay's gaze, and the man almost slapped himself for forgetting.

He's shorter than you, idiot.

It was like he forgot the reason he was here in the first place. He really could be his own nuisance from time to time.

With practiced ease, the English teacher craned his neck downwards in the direction of the other man.

Hooded and nervous green eyes met with wide and curious brown ones.

Clay felt the breath in his lungs escape his body from every possible orifice. His mouth lacked its much needed moisture, tongue sitting heavy against the inside of his cheek.

The older man seemed to reflect a similar reaction to the younger.

“Hello.” Was the only thing Clay could seem to muster after a pregnant pause between the two men. The shorter of the pair seemed lost, eyes squinting as if he was trying to process a simple word such as hello. It was like he noticed his own hesitation, face reflecting a shade of embarrassment. “Oh...hello again.” The brunette cleared his throat before looking back at the other man. “How can I help you?”

Clay didn’t think he was someone who had a thing accents. Being surrounded by several people who have distinct accents from different parts of one country, he swore he had heard it all. But this guy...this guy’s was something else. The accent he had was definitely different to that of Wilbur, Tommy and Tubbo’s. It wasn’t as heavy as the youngest, yet sounded less posh than that of Wilbur’s. To the blond, it was comforting. It was soft and nice to his ears. The brit hadn’t said much but Clay could hear him speak for the rest of his time here on this floating hunk of rock.

“Oh um...” Shit, he didn’t know why he was suddenly incapable of speaking like an adult. “I don’t need help per say, just a few minutes of your time if you aren’t busy?” The blond didn’t mean to form his statement as a question yet at the moment, his mind was too busy trying to put itself back together to care. The Brit seemed a bit taken aback at the question, arms crossing in front of the blue crew neck and collar combination he had going on. Clay watched as brown eyes were hidden slightly by questioning lids, pink lips pouted in thought, and pointed nose scrunched up with shaped brows in confused curiosity.

As silly as the face was for a simple question, Clay couldn’t find it in himself to look away.

After what felt like an eternity, the older man seemed to come back to reality with his desired answer. “I’m not busy...Is my time going to be needed somewhere from my classroom?” He asked, arms still crossed as his dark eyes locked with Clay’s brighter ones.

Clay didn’t expect the small bit of sass in the British man’s tone at first, until he remembered the advice he was given from Wilbur.

“He has a bit of an attitude problem, especially toward people bigger than him.”

Clay figured he was only receiving an eighth of what that true attitude problem was, considering it wasn’t anything too intense by the blond’s standards. He worked with teenagers for a living, more specifically, he’s taught Tommy for the past two years, he was sure to withstand some ribbing here and there.

“Not if you don’t want it to be.” Clay shrugged, an attempt at a kind smile being sent in the direction of the shorter man. Said man seemed to relax just a bit at the mention of that, the arms folded across his chest now dropping to his side. “Okay, you can come in if you’d like.” He offered, stepping aside so the bigger man could have a sample view of what was on the other side of the doorway.

The English teacher took the invitation. walking into the computer science teacher’s domain.

Once Clay was inside the room, he took to observing as much of the room as possible. Compared to his own room across the campus, there were obvious differences. The biggest one was of course the mass amount of technological gear spotted in every corner of the room. Towards the center of

the classroom, there were rectangular desks that were home to at least three computers, each paired with their own monitors, mouses and keyboards. About six of these desks surrounded three out of the four sides of this even bigger desk. And from the amount of paperwork stacked next to a projector and double monitor system, Clay could assume that that desk was the Brit's.

Besides the mass amount of technology present in the room, there were some hints of other man's personality. Clay couldn't help but notice that the room held a very monochromatic blue and grey color scheme. Clay found it relaxing in some odd way, and he was sure his students did too. Compared to his own eccentric and brightly decorated classroom, it was like a breath of fresh air.

Clay didn't seem to realize, but the short man had taken a seat at his desk, watching the blond take in every detail of his work space. "Sorry, I just...haven't been in this room before." The blond said dumbly, looking over at the brunette, who had let out a chuckle. "I know you haven't." He replied, his accent drawing out the vowels of each word. "Right." Clay chuckled nervously.

After that, silence joined the two men in the empty classroom. Clay seemed to have started fiddling with his fingers, a tic he developed in situations he felt nervous in. Almost like he sensed the growing tension, the older man spoke into the space between them. "I'm pretty sure this is our first meeting." He started off, seeming a bit nervous to even be the one to break this silence. "I'm George, or Mr. Davidson as the students call me."

Clay snapped back into reality once the British man's tone hit his ears. He seemed to laugh at the thought of this being their first meeting. First official meeting, that's for sure. "I know, I read your name tag outside." Clay pointed in the direction of the door. George's eyes went wide for a moment before returning to their normal size, face warming as he muttered, "Oh yeah..."

Silence was heavy between them once again. Only this time, it didn't last as long as the last one did, for Clay was the one to break it.

"This isn't our first meeting...well it is but like not, you know? Apparently we met a few months ago...it just wasn't quite the ideal meeting..." Clay supplied, chuckling quietly as if to soften the blow of his words. George looked in the direction of the blond's face, confusion once again heavy on his features. Clay wondered if that was the older man's default reaction to anything.

As if analyzing a difficult line of code, George's eyes seemed to scan every part of Clay's face, trying to connect a face to a person he happened to meet a while back. Clay didn't say anything else after his words from before, allowing George to try and rack his memory. And like an advanced calculus book, recognition smacked George square in the face. And his reaction was definitely a reaction.

"You're that tall bastard that called me a kid!"

If there was a camera recording this interaction, Clay would stare directly into the lens of it.

He expected George to recognize him, the guy had to have some great memory to be a computer science major, he just didn't expect for him to remember him like that.

"Well I wouldn't go as far as calling me a bastard but yeah, I am." Clay shrugged looking anyway but George's shocked face. He was sure if he got a good look at it, he'd have a hard time being serious. "Your name is Clay or whatever, right?" George asked the American, face contorting back

into some sort of neutral base.

Despite the dismissive nature George had, Clay couldn't help but fall for the way George's voice had said his name.

It was just as pretty as any other word the British man said during their time together.

Clay didn't seem to trust his voice with a verbal affirmation, going for a simple nod to answer the other man's question. That seemed to be enough for George, for he started giggling at the response. Clay's jade colored eyes widened in shock, not expecting a reaction like that to come from a man who just called him a bastard. "So you found out I wasn't actually a student, as you thought before? Surprised, tall man?" George asked, arms outstretched slightly, as if to show off what he couldn't during the time of their first meeting.

The sass just seemed to get worse and worse with every sentence.

Clay loved it.

Slightly more relaxed, Clay's body reflected his developing comfortability around the older man. "A bit. You know I felt bad once I found out that you were apart of the staff, and I intended on apologizing in hopes you didn't hate me for my stupid thinking. Yet, I don't think you care all too much." The blond commented, expecting a lot more hostility towards him after the brunette remembered who he was.

George's eyebrow quirked up in question, the corner of his lip stretching in the same direction. "Oh yeah?" The British man's voice seemed to come down an octave, accent now heavier than before.

Clay swore he never experienced something hotter in life.

Get it together man.

"Yeah. Wilbur had told me that you were really embarrassed about the entire thing." Was all Clay could respond with, trying really hard to not stutter or shake with his tone. He hated this.

He hated pretty boys.

"Wilbur? You're friends with that weirdo?" George asked, head popping in the general direction of the other British man's room. "Weren't you friends with him before me?" Clay shot back, watching as some of George's confidence waver. Clay's own small smirk was now on its way to his face. "Whatever. Anyway, Wilbur must've dramatized that up way too much. I was only embarrassed for like five minutes before I eventually got over it. Stuff like that happens to me

almost daily at this point so it doesn't bother me as much as it should've." The brunette hummed, arms crossing back in front of his body. "So you're telling me I didn't have to come all the way over here to apologize?" Clay deadpanned, watching as George shook his head. "Nope. But I wouldn't mind an apology." The older man said sweetly.

Clay didn't know if he wanted to punch this guy out of affection or kiss him out of attraction. There should be no way that this guy should be so...taunting when minutes ago he seemed so meek and quiet.

Wilbur *definitely* wasn't kidding about that attitude problem.

"Yeah, I don't just do things without a reason, George." Clay rolled his eyes, fake irritation evident in his tone. At least he hoped it was evident. He didn't want to mess up this dynamic the two had created between them in the last five minutes with *another* misunderstanding. George seemed to catch onto Clay's tone, letting out a sigh of fake disappointment. "Isn't that a shame, Clay?"

Stop saying my name so prettily

Is what the blond wanted to say

"It sure is, George."

Was what he ended up saying.

There was once again another silent pause between the two of them. Yet compared the past two, it wasn't filled with unease or uncertainty. Instead, it was replaced with contempt and...tension. The two were unsure what kind of tension but...it was definitely tension. A look was shared between the two men, a look that shared some unspoken connection with them both.

Something clicked between the two of them, and neither of them were blind to it.

The silence was once again broken by George, a small smile gracing those pouty and pink lips as he spoke,

"It's nice to meet you again, Clay."

Clay couldn't help but mirror the other man's actions.

"It's nice to meet you again as well, George."

Chapter End Notes

okay so hello. i'm sorry for such a late update. i'm currently going through a lot

mentally and sometimes it just takes a lot for me to sit down and write (hence why i write at like 12am since that's the most free time i have). but alas, here is the first (second) meeting between george and dream. i hope it was fun to read for you guys. and thank you all for the support on this story, for real. you are all too sweet. i'll see you guys in the next update <3

different

Chapter Summary

clay struggles with conformity in a world where difference is weird.

Chapter Notes

disclaimer: this chapter hones in heavily on ADHD and ADHD symptoms, especially rejection sensitivity. as someone with ADHD, Clay/Dream's experience with ADHD in this story is reflective of my own. this is no way of saying that every person with ADHD, or Clay/Dream with his own ADHD, experiences ADHD this way. this is a story about character inspired by his real life counterpart, not a direct correlation. keep that in mind when you read this chapter.

and as always, ignore the grammar mistakes and enjoy the 6,000 words of this new chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay felt like he wasn't normal.

For as long as he could remember, the blond had issues with a whole bunch of things that normal people didn't have to go through. Compared to other people, Clay's mind constantly seemed to be running rampant. Everything and nothing was what his mind was filled with, and his mind couldn't seem to figure out how to focus on what the blond it needed to be fixated on.

One of the many reasons this was an issue was that it made school a bit difficult. As much as he wanted to pay attention to his multiplication tables in math class, his brain refused to retain any information or even trying to retain the information. When he had to do his history project for show and tell, the blond completely disregarded the work until the night before, for that was the night his brain remembered after days of forgetting. The only class he had no problem paying attention in was, surprise surprise, was English. Otherwise known as the class that made Clay's little ten year old brain settle down for forty five minutes and attempt at learning what the lesson offered. Of course at the time where Clay's divergence from his peers showed itself, English was simply referred to as Language Arts.

Reading was the boy's escape from any issue he seemed to be dealing with. He didn't know that his excessive reading would end up being a symptom of his unknown difference until he was in middle school, nor did he expect that having a specific class that held all his interest would be one as well.

English wasn't his brain's only favorite fixation though. Video games were a close second.

His complete obsession (as his parents described it as) with game mechanics and programming has been there since the age of seven. He couldn't describe why he had such a fascination, adding to the growing list of things that he could find wrong with his brain. He knew kids his age could like

things a lot, but for him, it seemed like on a different level. If anyone mentioned the hottest game on the market at any given time, chances of Clay having an entire mental file stashed away about it, ready to be shared, were extremely high. His mouth would move before his brain had time to think, as if its ignition was started up by some sort of key.

It would only be when the blond was halfway through his info dump that he would notice the person he was talking to couldn't care less about anything he had to say. That or they were freaked out that he had so much to say on a certain topic.

Once reality settled, Clay's mind would shut down, as would his mouth. Once bright and excited eyes started conjuring unshed tears and would be accompanied by an apology of shame. Despite being shut down, Clay's mind would work overtime in trying to convince his young self that he was being annoying and should just shut up for the rest of his life.

That was another issue Clay realized about his brain; it made him sensitive to anything and everything.

Kids around his age were sensitive, that was a given. Their bodies finally start to grow into themselves during a time of learning and error, sensitivity was needed. But when anyone gave Clay some sort of indication that they weren't interested in anything in anything he had to say or interested in *him*, his world would come crashing down in the worst way. Clay was sensitive to a lot of things, but being *looked* at like he was the weirdest person in the world made the blond want to run away from the entirety of humanity.

Things such as these happening to Clay at such a young age just made him feel like an outsider. He felt as if he couldn't communicate properly with kids his age. His parents tried their hardest to assure the blond that it was normal to only like one subject in school, that it's alright to like a hobby more than others, that it's okay to cry when someone's body language isn't what you hoped it to be. Clay wanted to believe that, he really did. His parents were so loving and sweet to him, there was no way they would allow their son to live in confusion about how his mind worked.

So the blond never brought it up again.

He just believed he was a kid with a bigger heart than others. That people were just not used to a sensitive not so little boy with attention span inconsistencies, so they just strayed away. He acted like it didn't bother him much but he realized that that way of thinking ultimately brought upon the one thing Clay didn't want to be true, that he was different. He treated himself differently than other people did the same. Without even trying he ended up hermitting himself from the rest of the world. Leaving him no one by his side. Well not no one, but there was only one. And Clay figured that out one afternoon in a home that wasn't his own.

"Nick, I think you're my only friend."

Thirteen year old Clay was sitting on the coffee colored carpet of his best, and apparently only, friend's small apartment room when he came to such a conclusion. It was a Friday afternoon, about an hour after elementary school had let out for the day. Nick had walked over to the seventh grade wing to ask Clay if he wanted to spend the night at his place this week, just like he did every Friday. Nick was in the grade below Clay, so for a sixth grader to walk to the other hall to ask the tall kid if he wanted to hang out garnered a lot of odd looks from older students. Not like Clay minded, because if he did, he wouldn't say yes every single time Nick made his journey down to his home room. It's not like the blond had much to do, he just admitted the younger boy was his only friend.

Speaking of said friend, at the mention of this revelation, his head shot up from the action figures

in his hand. It took a moment before the question really hit Nick. The twelve year old's untamed brow furrowed in mild confusion, lips situated in a small pout as he tried thinking of a response. "That can't be true. You have people talking to you all the time." The youngest tried to reason, brown eyes staring down green. The blond's mouth went into a straight line before he replied. "Yeah but I don't talk back." He mumbled.

"Why don't you? Talking is like...the biggest part to making friends." Nick still seemed confused about this entire conversation. With a shrug of his shoulders, the eldest followed up his previous statement. "I don't know...I just feel like they won't like me if they heard me talk about anything." Clay fiddled with his fingers, picking at the hangnail he had gotten from his nail biting habit. His parents told him he needed to stop that before he ruined them for good, but he couldn't help it. It was impulsive.

When it had gotten quiet, he looked back up at Nick, jade filled irises asking for some sort of permission to carry on. He didn't know what compelled him to suddenly start talking about his feelings with Nick. He and his best friend never really had deep talks, especially at the age they were at. The most they had gotten this serious was when Nick had to stay at Clay's after the youngest's mom forgot about him in a drunken haze. And Nick had cried to the oldest about how he didn't like what his mom did when his parents fought. But after that time of weakness, they never brought it up again. The boys just focused on the happy bubble they found themselves in with each other.

So when Nick's deep brown eyes gave the unspoken "go ahead" to the eldest, Clay felt more at ease to speak on what had been bothering him for the past year. He knew that he wasn't going to get a clear answer, he doubted Nick knew half the things that were going on in his own mind, let alone Clay's. But, he trusted him enough with information as sensitive as this. And with that, he had tried maintaining eye contact as he spoke his next few words.

"Before I even talk, just the thought of them making fun of me or not being interested makes me shut down. Or when I play with my fingers or my jacket, they always ask me to stop moving and I just can't. If I stop moving, then I become nervous for no reason or I stop paying attention to any of the words they're saying. I sometimes make noises when I'm focusing on things and people come up to me and tell me to be quiet. But just like me moving and stuff, I can't stop it. I want to, I don't know how." The blond was just spilling his thoughts all over the metaphorical floor of this conversation, small tears forming in the corners of his eyes. "That's not even half the stuff I think is wrong. I forget about things if I don't see them enough, even people. I get distracted by my head all the time and zone out in big things. I do all these things that I shouldn't do. And people don't like them at all. Making friends is scary because my brain automatically thinks everyone is going to be mean to me, or my brain makes people be mean to me." The blond looked away, knowing full well that Nick's face had slowly been reflecting some sort of shared misery.

After Clay's little thought vomit, the boys sat in silence for what felt like years. Neither of them knew who should break the emptiness between them. Clay figured he shouldn't, since all he's been doing was talking, but Nick felt like he shouldn't speak at all. It wasn't often that Nick got serious, or said anything that was meaningful in a way that was helpful. He was only twelve at the time, to be fair, though present day Clay would argue that even at twenty-six Nick remained the same in that aspect.

Finally, though, the youngest of the pair decided to finally give a response to his friend's current crisis.

"So your brain is being a bitch?"

The youngest was watching as green eyes widened in shock, tears from before forgotten as he focused on what had just left his friend's mouth. "Nick! You can't say those words!" He whispered, looking back at the closed door that separates the boys from Nick's parents. The air between them had shifted from that of sadness to something a bit more comfortable. The youngest threw his hands up in defense, pout heavy on his lips as he argued back. "What? My dad uses that to describe my momma when she's doing something bad. Your brain is making you feel bad about dumb things, so it's being a bit—" Clay shut his friend up with a hand before he could repeat himself. "You're so loud!"

The youngest didn't seem to like that very much, still saying the word Clay wished he could ignore into his freckled palm. He only brought his hand back when Nick's tongue came into contact with it.

"You're dirty." The blond groaned, wiping his hand on his shorts to rid it of Nick germs. The youngest just giggled before he remembered what the initial conversation was about. "Oh yeah your brain." Nick pointed to the blond's mop of shaggy blond hair, which was close enough to the head of the eldest. "It's dumb."

Clay couldn't help but laugh lightly. "Yeah tell me about it..." There was another pause for silence before Nick seemed to be interested in a thought of his. He shot up from his spot on the floor and got onto his twin mattress, adorned with red and black blankets and a fuck ton of pillows. Those pillows didn't seem to matter to Nick though, for he was kicking them off in every direction.

Clay watched as Nick sprawled out on his newly gutted bed, getting closer to the edge so he could lean his head all off of it. His bangs flipped outward, showing off eyes of sweet chocolate and a pale forehead. A blond brow raised in question, looking directly at the youngest boy for answers. The question didn't even get to come out of his mouth before Nick was answering for him. "Join me. Momma says that if you want your brain to shut up you have to let it rest." He hummed, reaching an arm in the direction of his friend.

Clay's face eased into a smile as he took the invitation, pulling himself onto the bed right next to Nick. He mimicked the other boy, head hanging off the end of the bed, the world around him being flipped. "Your room looks weird." Clay murmured, hands reaching out in front of him to see how they looked in this new perspective. One of them was gently smacked by the other boy. "You're weird." Was the amazing comeback Nick had.

Clay's smile faltered.

"I know."

Nick's head turned in the direction of his friend, watching as he put his arms onto his stomach, still staring at the upside down world in front of him.

"Why can't I be normal?"

Clay looked over at Nick when he asked his question, the awkward angle that his friend's face was at not being enough to summon a smile out of him. Nick's eyes softened as he looked at Clay, frown deep on his face. "You are normal, Clay. People are just mean." He assured, not missing the way Clay's eyes glassed over once more. "It's okay to feel upset at your brain. Because your brain is mean too. But you shouldn't be mean to yourself because of it." Nick mumbled, the hand closest to Clay reaching out for blond's.

"But...how am I gonna do good with anything if I feel like this all the time?"

The smaller hand adorned in cuts and bandages gripped a slightly larger and fidgeting one.

“I don’t know, I’m not a doctor. But I know that you’re a tough guy. You play Mortal Kombat on hard mode, man.”

Nick didn’t miss the small giggle the blond responded with. “Seriously though, you’re not weird in the slightest. Different? Yeah, but different is normal.” The brunette spoke softly, watching as unshed tears started to fall. “And if anyone tells you different, I’ll just beat them up.” Nick raised their connected fists in the air, punching at nothingness with exaggerated sound effects.

When the laugh that came out of Clay was his iconic wheeze, Nick knew he had succeeded at cheering up his best friend. Eventually ugly wheezes let out by the eldest sparked the youngest into a fury.

“Why are you still laughing?!”

“T-The thought of y-your short—“

“You better not finish that sentence, you son of bitch!”

“STOP SAYING THAT!”

That day, Clay’s crisis definitely wasn’t squashed. Even when he was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of fifteen, he still felt as if having a label to what had been plaguing him for years just made it worse. However, moments such as that never lasted more than just that, a moment. For the words of his buddy had been etched into every crevice of his brain.

“Different? Yeah, but different is normal.”

“Jay Gatsby. What are the first words that come to mind when this man’s name is said.”

Standing in front of his white board, Clay had printed the character’s name dead center of the board, following it up with his own answer right beneath it.

Socialite.

Once his back wasn’t facing his class, several answers were shouted in the direction of the blond. With a chuckle, Clay waved his hand in the air. “Hey, I know all of you guys got some important answers but despite contrary belief, I can’t hear all of you at the same time. A hand raise would be nice.” He watched as his class groaned, seeming to forget about the topic at hand to instead start complaining to the man about how raising hands was stupid.

The blond just rubbed the front of his forehead, trying his hardest not to laugh at some of things his students were saying in retaliation to his suggestion. He totally didn’t choke when someone said it was homophobic.

“Okay okay, since you guys want to be treated like high schoolers...how about you guys just not yell at the same time?” He suggested, mark resting on the white board as he waited for his lesson to actually start. Surprisingly the kids were okay with that and it worked just as well. The most shouts from the class only came in a pair of two, making it easier for the blond to pinpoint

answers.

“A man!” “Good observation”

“Rich!” “Very much true.”

“Secretive” “For the most part of the book, yes.”

“Gay!” “G- did you just say gay?”

Clay looked back at the student who screamed out their answer, who simply shrugged. “You did say whatever came to mind when we think of him. He and Nick had to have something going on. Otherwise Nick wouldn’t have been writing about Gatsby like he was the love of his life.”

“Oh come on now, I’m not putting gay on the—“ Clay didn’t even get to finish his sentence before he was bombarded by a group of angry teenagers He could feel the headache coming on strong.

“By your rules, teach, they’re right.” A male student pointed out from the back of the class, a shrug on his shoulders. “I mean yeah but—“

“Don’t tell me you’re homophobic, Dream!” One of the female students yelled out, Clay’s eyes popping out of his own head. “How can I be homophobic when I’m literally not straight?” He shot right back at her. “I know a lot of homophobic non straights. You can be another.” The student replied back with. Soon enough the class was now in “shock” that Clay had “come out” as homophobic in the middle of a Great Gatsby lesson.

Clay sometimes wondered why he even tried debating teenagers, because all they would do is argue back. He raised his arms up in defense, and with a roll of his eyes he finally gave in.
“Alright, alright. I’ll put gay up here since you’re up my ass about it.” He sighed, finishing the word ‘gay’ next to the word ‘socialite’, ears blanketed by the noises of teenage celebration.

While his back was turned to his white board, finishing up the rest of the answers he was able to catch from his students, he heard his door open. He didn’t pay no mind to it until his student pointed it out.

“Teach, someone’s here for you.”

Clay looked back towards the front of the class, before looking in the direction of the door. He expected Techno there, probably coming to ask why he heard the word ‘gay’ chanted on his side of their shared wall. What he didn’t expect was George, the (pretty) computer science teacher from across campus, standing there with a small smile.

Clay couldn’t seem to smile back normally.

It’s been about two weeks since their official introduction, and since then, the two remainder on good, professional, terms. If they saw each other in the hall, or in the teacher’s lounge, they would shoot a quick smile in each other’s direction. But besides that, the two of them hadn’t spoken much since that day.

And as much as Clay didn’t want it to bother him, it did, severely. From those short ten minutes of conversation, Clay’s interest in the other spiked ever so greatly. He didn’t know what it was. Maybe it was the fact that George was way too pretty for Clay to not be entranced by, it could be the amount of sass that he had in his tiny body. Or it could be the fact that he was so willing to talk to Clay despite their previous interaction.

All Clay knew was that he couldn't get George out of his head.

Today, the man wasn't dressed in a colored sweater and skinny jeans. Instead, he wore a blue button up tucked into a nice pair of slacks, which hugged his waist with a black leather belt. The shoes didn't seem to get the memo about the slight formal wear George had going on, for a pair of white Vans were in place of typical dress shoes. Clay's lips turned up into a smile at the casual shoe choice.

He didn't know how much time had passed between the time his students informed that George was here to see him and the time Clay was shamelessly checking him out, but he figured it was a long time considering George seemed to shift awkwardly in his place.

Cute.

"Hello Mr. Davidson, what can I do ya for?" He asked, mentally slapping himself at the words he used. He doesn't think he's ever said any rendition of that sentence to anybody in his life. So why did his brain think it was a good time to say that *now*.

His class even seemed confused about the words, most of them starting to whisper among themselves as they watched this interaction go on. Clay so badly wanted to believe that the hushed conversations weren't about him, but alas, he doubted his beliefs meant nothing at the moment. "Sorry for interrupting your class, I thought you would be free." That soft British accent blessed the blond's ears for the first time in two weeks, and Clay felt entranced. "We were just doing a quick character analysis, if you would call it that. You weren't interrupting much." Clay assured, watching dark eyes trail over to the marked board. Those same eyes widened as he read what was written down.

"Gay?"

Clay wasn't drinking anything, yet he somehow managed to choke. His face got red from the undeniable embarrassment he brought upon himself

His students didn't seem to share his sentiment.

"Yeah, Jay Gatsby was gay for Nick." A female student piped up, making her fellow peers snicker amongst themselves. Clay's heart clenched as he watched George's confused mannerisms set onto his face. "He was? I mean I've read the Great Gatsby, and I don't remember him being explicitly gay." The eldest mumbled, genuinely wanting to know where this conclusion was drawn from. The student from before continued on, not expecting the man to actually be interested in their thought process.

"Well the book is written from Nick's perspective and any time he mentions Gatsby, he keeps mentioning all the good things about him and about how he was nervous to meet up with him, right?"

"If I remember correctly, yes."

"Okay so from there.."

The rest of Clay's class period was spent explaining the underling homoerotic subplot to one of history's English novels to the interested computer science teacher. He actually had situated himself down in the TA desk Clay had reserved next to him for Tubbo, simply watching from his desk. He had given up on trying to talk himself out of this or explain to George that his class wasn't usually like this. That in itself would be a lie, because this honestly was what his class was ninety

percent of the time. He just couldn't believe he had George dragged into it.

But judging by George's smiles and engaging questions, he doubted the man minded.

Eventually, the bell had rung, signaling to the students that it was time for lunch. The majority of them seemed to forget their time limit, trying to wrap up any loose ends as much as they could. "Mr. Davidson, you should come to interrupt class a lot more." A male student suggested on his way out, being dragged out by his overexcited buddies. George just shrugged, a smile still on his face. "Depends on your teacher. I didn't expect to stay too long." George looked up at Clay with soft eyes. Clay couldn't meet those eyes.

It was only a few more minutes before the two men were now left alone in Clay's classroom, muffled footsteps and voices of all kinds blocked by a heavy wooden door. Besides that, it was silent. Clay had sat back down in his desk chair, spinning it so he could face George. His heart regretted such a mistake but George was already looking at him before he faced him fully. The blond didn't notice this beforehand, but George also had his glasses on. They were resting on the top of his slanted nose, hardly providing any use in the angle they were in. Clay didn't think he could be any cuter.

"Hi." George's soft voice filled their empty void.

"Hey." Clay's deeper tone soon joined his.

"Sorry for interrupting your class. My class had a meeting with their counselors regarding their schedules for next term and I had nothing to do. I forgot we had the same break time so I honestly would have showed up then but you were the only person I thought of seeing." George explained his initial thought process, eyes breaking the eye contact they shared to instead look at pieces of fuzz on his thighs. Clay was trying to wrap his mind around the words George had told him. Out of all the friends he knew George had at this school (Clay found out from Wilbur that George was pretty close with Alex and Karl), he decided that he would spend his free time with a man he hardly knew.

Clay felt his heart soar. "Is that right? Miss me?" He teased, smiling at the scoff that George let slip out. "Miss you? I don't miss anyone. I just wanted to see why you have yet to come talk to me since our little talk." The Brit questioned, his arms crossing over his chest, staring at the bigger man with some sort of flint in his eyes. "George, I don't know if anyone told you this but, wondering why a guy isn't talking to you is you missing him. Did I leave such an impact on you already?" The scarlet hue that painted the older man's neck and cheeks was enough of an answer for him. "I don't miss *you*, I miss our conversations."

"We've only had one."

George's glare towards the blond could definitely kill.

Clay would gladly be a victim of it any day.

"Don't worry George," Clay chuckled, hand reaching over to place itself on George's shoulder. He didn't miss the way his body went stiff at the touch. "I missed our 'conversations' as well." His hand was shrugged off by the Brit, which totally didn't puncture Clay's growing thought that George was somewhat okay with the physicality the blond wanted. If he was younger, he would've completely shut up by now and just sit in silence as he would've convinced himself that George wanted him gone forever. Yet currently, he grounded himself in the alternative, that George was just playing around.

“Whatever...” The brunette followed up his shoulder shrug. Well that certainly wasn’t helping Clay feel secure in this interaction. George must’ve noticed that his attitude wasn’t coming off as joking as he thought it was, quickly changing his demeanor as he placed his hand on Clay’s knee.

Well hello there.

Clay looked back up at the shorter man, who was offering one of his smiles, apologetic and genuine. “Sorry. I thought my tone was joking enough. I didn’t mean to sound like an ass.” He said softly, hand patting the kneecap of the blond. Clay didn’t know what made his heart clench more; George’s sweet tone or the fact that George noticed that he upset Clay and *apologized*. As Clay grew older, he tried keeping his sensitivity to the little things contained and locked away. His emotions could be considered valid when he was young, but toxic male standards prevented him from carrying that validity with him as he grew older. Even if he had doctor issued excuse for it. So for George to notice the slight mannerisms Clay gave off when something had affected him, despite only talking to him once, it did something to the blond.

Clay was quiet for a moment as he tried to wrap his head around all that was going on. His brain had shut down, but for the opposite reason it usually would in social situations such as this. It shut down out of happiness. Judging from George’s face, he could tell that the man was being patient with him, giving him some time to focus back into what was happening. If he kept looking at him with those caring eyes and unwavering smile, Clay doubted that he would ever come back to reality.

When Clay trusted his voice, he finally responded. “It’s alright...I’m just way too sensitive for my own good.” He brushed it off like it was nothing, placing his hands on his knees. It didn’t realize George’s hand was still on his left knee until his larger hand engulfed it with ease. He expected George to jerk away like before, but he didn’t. He seemed relatively okay with the touch. “It’s okay to be sensitive.” George shrugged, looking back at the young man’s face. “No but I’m like...really sensitive. Body language throws me off the edge of overthinking hardcore type of sensitive.” He explained, the pointer finger helping to the hand on George’s started to twitch. “Yeah, and that’s okay. I’ll just make sure to watch how I speak and act around you, make sure it’s authentic as it can be. Though, I can be pretty awkward. I hardly know the emotion I want to convey half the time.” The man giggled, eyes creasing slightly as the noise escaped him.

Clay felt like he was going to implode.

This guy hardly knew Clay yet was being the most patient person the blond had the pleasure of knowing.

Who even was he?

“Uh, thank you.” Was all Clay could muster. George nodded. “Of course.”

Silence seemed to be the staple for the two of them, because they found themselves in another serving of it. Only this one was different. They currently sat staring at one another’s faces, hands practically interlocked on top of Clay’s knees. Neither of them wanted to move from this position though, it being too comfortable for the amount of checking out they were doing.

In their current situation, Clay was able to visually explore every part of George’s face. He noticed the long lashes connected to the hooded lids housing deep auburn eyes. Bruising purple flushed beneath his eyes, signaling sleep deprivation and stress. Similar to himself, George had some freckles. Specks of angel kisses were situated on the left side, leaving the right bare to interpretation. Sloped and pointed nose was the centerpiece of this man’s face, matching his high cheekbones and sharp jawline. On the space between his sweet pink lips, formed by a thinner upper

lip and fatter bottom one, was freshly shaved hair. It's shadow contrasted the pale and pink undertones of George's skin quite nicely, adding some life to the man.

In other words...George was gorgeous. Prettier than any other man Clay laid his eyes on.

God, he was fucked.

"Is there something on my face?"

Clay felt himself be snapped out of his trance by the quiet accented voice in front of him. His head shook very quickly, blond hair whipping back and forth as he did. "No, just got distracted." He admitted. Which wasn't a lie in the slightest. George, though a bit skeptical about the short answer, didn't push any further, opting for a simple nod. "Well...since we're here and have the time now, would you like to have more of our conversations?" George suggested. "I don't know what it is but...ever since that day you came to apologize, I just feel like we should get closer. Friends wise." The Brit seemed to stumble out the last part, as if they weren't a part of his initial response. "I've felt the same. Not every day you run into a teacher thinking he's a student because he's so small." Clay joked, getting a 'punch' in the arm from the free hand of George. "I'm not that small. I'm average height." The older man argued.

"Well I'm 6'3" so something tells me you're small." The blond snickered, only getting a surprised stare in response. "You're over six feet?!" The Brit's tone seemed to bump up a few octaves at the mention of this. "That's not right, what the hell. What did your parents feed you?" George shouted, hitting the other man again. Clay hardly felt it. "Titty milk for a good eight months." Was the first thing that came to the blond's mind, and apparently was the first thing he said as well. George made a face that resembled confused amusement. "W-What the fuck?!" George couldn't help but start laughing at the vulgarity of the blond's words.

Compared to Clay's laugh, that sounded like he was thriving off of one functioning lung, George's was light and airy. It still had some sort of cackle elements into it, being shown by the crows feet that appeared on the corners of his eyes from just how hard he was laughing. He tried covering his mouth, but the beautiful sound slipped through the multiple cracks created between his lips and his hand.

Clay was really struggling to not fall for this boy over the bare minimum.

"I'm not wrong like at all, I was breastfed." Clay tried explaining himself through the noises orchestrated by the older man. "I-I asked you how you got so tall, I-I didn't need to know that!" The Brit's laugh had soon simmer down into sweet giggles, trying to catch his breath as he spoke. "Whew...hold on, you almost sent me into an asthma attack...and I don't even have asthma..." Clay let out a wheeze.

Once both men were settled down from their laughing fits, they had offered each other a smile of genuine content. "We're you serious about the...us getting close thing? Because I'm totally okay with hanging out outside of work or getting to talk." Clay spoke after their breaths had evened. George nodded with an affirmative hum, both his arms now back in his control as he folded his hands together. "That sounds nice. How would we communicate outside of work though?"

"Ever heard of a cell phone?"

"Ever heard of shutting up?"

That time Clay could distinguish jokes from reality, watching as George's face reddened in the process of looking for his phone. The blond did the same, getting his phone out of his desk drawer

before opening up a new contact.

The two men exchanged numbers in that room, sending each other messages to make sure that they both had gotten the correct one. And soon enough, their lunch break had ended. The old metal bell ringing all around the school informing both faculty and students it was time to resume classes.

Even though he didn't want to, George had to go back to his class. This class was the one with Tubbo and Tommy and he knew if he wasn't there before them, they would attempt to take over his room. And with one last goodbye, George practically ran out of the room, almost running into a few of Clay's students as he did.

Clay had let out a deep sigh, rubbing his eyes and forehead as he allowed his next class to pile in. He was already hearing chatter amongst them all, and he definitely didn't miss the whispers about "Mr. Davidson" suddenly running out of his classroom. He didn't have the energy to deal with that at all at the moment.

All he was focused on right now was George.

George's pretty face.

George's pretty laugh.

George's pretty accent.

Clay's mind was just plagued by George. And like an addict, he needed his next fix. Before the tardy bell rang for a second time, officially starting the afternoon classes, Clay took one more look at his phone. He noticed a new message from a minute ago.

george :)

sorry, almost bulldozed half your kids

Despite how ridiculous the message was, Clay couldn't help but smile.

Chapter End Notes

honestly i didn't feel motivated to write at all when i started drafting this and suddenly it turned into 6,000 words of slight angst and fluff so i don't know what that means.

anyway, we got some more platonic dreamnap going on. i promise that all the dreamnap is not going to only happen through flashbacks and whatnot, there will be a time where we meet present time sapnap and see if he has changed (he really hasn't)

but we also got some dnf build up. i think that was about 4,000 words right there whew. my buddy said how i described george through dream's eyes sounded very much like a gay man so as a bisexual enby, i feel like i did my part.

anyway, i hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. let me know your thoughts in the comments. i love getting to read them and respond to them all. stay safe and i love you all! <3

five years

Chapter Summary

relationship advice is one of clay's specialities, too bad he can't keep one of his own

Chapter Notes

i feel like the theme for this chapter won't be as noticeable as the previous ones so i'm just going to say it

clay has a lot relationship experience, but only when it comes to sex and fleeting attraction. he's able to help others achieve happy and lasting relationships yet he can't do the same for himself.

anyway enjoy 6,500 words of dialogue and third wheel clay.

ignore grammar mistakes it's currently 1:40am...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay had to be the best goddamned friend in the world.

That may be an exaggeration but it sure felt like the truth.

It was finals season at the blond's college, and lucky for him, his grades were high enough for him to be exempted from any of his finals that he was supposed to participate in. Not only did this situation result in a boost of Clay's ego and self esteem, but it left the next week and a half to him to just do whatever he felt like. And like any other popular uni student, he spent it in seedy bars and house parties that left one disoriented well into the early morning.

Last night wasn't anything different, in fact Clay doubted he actually slept for the hour between the party and the time he got back to his apartment. Time just didn't exist to the blond in this current moment. Maybe that's why he doesn't remember when and why he accepted the call that interrupted his eye rest.

"Clay, you're here!"

The shrill tone of the college student's classmate buzzed against the eardrums of the blond.

At the moment, Clay's phone read a time of **06:00am**, highlighted by his extremely bright lock screen. His current position was located in the campus library, dressed in nothing more than bleach stained sweatpants, a black t-shirt and a white zip up hoodie hanging off of his relaxed shoulders. Through lidded eyes riddled with exhaustion, the blond was able to decipher who it was that he was meeting up with.

At the table in the far back of the corner sat a young man with shaggy brown curls, eyes with a similar tone to his own hidden slightly beneath the bangs. Despite the early hour, he wore a gentle

smile, looking up after blond with anticipation. Clay wondered how it was possible to be as awake as the other at the moment, his own body experiencing the effect of late night with another hot stranger in some shady bar downtown.

“Hey Karl.”

Was all the blond’s brain capacity seemed to handle at this given time.

The older man didn’t seem to notice too much, his buzzing energy never diminishing as Clay found his seat in front of him. “I’m glad to see that you’re alive and well.” Karl hummed, watching as the younger rubbed any trace of exhaustion from his view. “Why wouldn’t I be?” Clay questioned, looking from underneath his lash up at the other man. Karl’s finger extended itself from his sweater, the rest of his fist being hidden by purple fabric. “Your neck looks like it’s seen better days.”

Clay’s facial complexion reflected a deep scarlet, his hand going to fix the fabric looped around his neck to try and hide the evidence of his last night fun. “Uh yeah...” The blond found it too embarrassing to even try and elaborate on that, knowing full well that it would just be more information Karl would use against him in some way. “I don’t think I’ve ever met a man with a high sex drive than you, Clay.” The brunette snickered, hands folding underneath his thighs, a habit Clay often found the older man doing from time to time. A blond brow rose beneath a mop of messy locks. “Thank you...?”

Karl’s head nodded, a small hum adding to the affirming nature that his words were supposed to convey. Clay decided not to question the other further, mumbling something about how backhanded the “compliment” was. He then remembered that he was sat in the campus library far earlier than any time that his class had been scheduled for the day. With a tilt of his head, he looked to Karl with interest. “Why am I here again?”

“To help me out of course.” Karl’s lips buzzed together as if he was amused by Clay’s question. “Well yeah I got your text about the helping out thing but you never told me what I was helping you with. And you told me not to bring my school shit.” Clay muttered, observing as Karl’s curls bounced slightly every time he swiveled his head around. It was like he was looking for someone. “Yeah because what I need help with doesn’t require dumb text books.” The brunette muttered, shifting in his seat until he was sat on his knees. Clay was still confused about what was going on, especially as to why his classmate was on a stakeout of some sort. “Well can I know?” The blond asked, Karl stopping in his tracks to finally void the confusion of the other.

“I need your moral support when I’m talking to Nick.”

Clay didn’t think this situation could be more confusing.

“How do you know about Nick? And why do you want to talk to him?” Clay followed up, observing as Karl’s hands now laid in lap, fingertips drumming against the black fabric shielding his skin from the eyes of the world. Karl wanting Clay’s best friend to talk to him wasn’t something that the blond was against in the slightest. He just found it odd.

The man before him and his childhood best friend have had no connection before. Their schedules never would line up either, for Karl was a fashion major and Nick was studying for his computer science degree. If anything, the only connection the two of them had was the blond himself. He knew Karl from his art and English class, and he knew Nick from...well childhood. He doesn’t remember ever bringing up either one of them to each other before, especially not their names. There was no discernible reason for that, their paths just never crossed that Clay felt the need to introduce each other in any way. With this in mind, this only heightened the man’s confusion.

Karl was now looking at the blond, trying to read his expression for any indicator that he was uncomfortable with the situation at hand. Clay only realized after his words that he sounded a bit rude in his tone, the questions being extremely direct in the worst way. "Sorry, I didn't mean it like that. I'm just...confused on how you know Nick since I don't think I spoke about him to you like...ever." The blond offered his apology, watching as Karl let up just a bit in his body, though his eyes still held some sort of hesitation. "Yeah you haven't..." The brunette mumbled, sliding into his chair in another new position. "We just ran into each other about two weeks ago here around this same time. I was during my research project over the design ascents of European style and I wanted to get as many books over the topic before someone else did as early as possible. I wasn't really paying attention and while I was looking at a book while walking to this table, I ran into a stupid chair." The older man grumbled, arms crossing over his chest. From the corner of his eyes, he could see a slightly shaking form, Clay attempting to stifle the urge he had to laugh at Karl.

The man was a walking disaster, too clumsy to live in a world with far too many obstacles. "It's not that funny, I could've died, Clay." Karl huffed, kicking his foot out to make contact with the taller individual. With a shrug of his shoulders, Clay scoffed. "To a library chair? I doubt that but then again...you trip over your own feet while sitting down." That time, Clay really got kicked in the shin, whispering out a curse as he leaned down to rub the bruising skin. "Okay okay I get it, no need to hurt me." The blond mumbled, not missing the smirk the other wore on his face.

"Thank you...anyway, as I was saying. This stupid library chair was in my way and when I ran into it, I ended up falling over the entire table." Karl's hand planted itself on his face, painted nails adding speckles of color to the slightly red face he was sporting. "And of course with my luck, the table had to be occupied by a guy with books and papers spread out everywhere. He had this coffee on the table and when I fell, I knocked it over and you know where it fell? On his computer!" The brunette exclaimed, hands going into his hair to tug on the strands. Clay couldn't help the wince that left his mouth. Karl sighed as he started to close his eyes. "Yeah tell me about it...I felt so bad." The brunette remained in his position before his head snapped over to the younger. "Anywho, I ended up messing with this guy's entire study session early in the morning and possibly effed up his computer big time. I was freaking out because if I was in his position, I would start the next world war and I was afraid he would do the same." Clay just nodded along, aware of Karl's storytelling at this point and knew that the main aspect of this story wouldn't be revealed until the very end. "Thankfully, this guy didn't bash my head into the table himself, and when I was apologizing profusely, he was just cleaning up my mess and telling me it was alright. I think he was just trying not to make a scene the same way I was." Karl mumbled. "I then told him that I would pay for any damage on his laptop since I doubt that my fall didn't cause any harm to it. So we exchanged numbers and I told him I would have the money today."

Clay gave a nod of understanding but his questions still weren't answered. "Am I just supposed to know you knew Nick had a connection with me or...?" The brunette was doing everything but addressing the elephant in their conversation. "Oh!" It was like the sentence itself reminded Karl of what his story intended purpose was. "Yeah sorry, I kind sidetracked. No, I didn't just know that. When we were exchanging numbers, I saw the back of his phone and there was a photo of the two of you there." The brunette smiled. The small lightbulb in the blond's head started fluttering to life at the observation, letting out a quiet 'oh' in place of a response. Clay forgot about the polaroid photo the two boys took at a party a few months ago. Nick insisted on keeping it because "*we just look so hot dude*" and Clay was well okay with giving it up. "Okay so that answers how you know who Nick is...but why am I here?"

With Clay's question out in the air, the fashion major shifted in his seat, bottom lip sealed between white teeth as blue eyes looked everywhere but the blond's green ones. Clay wanted to push forward verbally, but he was aware the other would crack eventually from the questioning gaze set

on him. And just like the blond's prediction, Karl's selective silence was broken. "I want to talk to him more than just a money exchange..."

"Okay?" Clay didn't seem to catch on to what the brunette was hinting at. "Like...get to know him and stuff..." Karl's lips were set in a pout, giving his words a slight lisp as he spoke. "Yeah, couldn't you do that on your own?" The blond may seem like he was fishing for answers out of his poor classmate, but in all honesty, he was still confused as to why he had to be here while Karl talked to Nick. "Well yeah I could but...I'm shy, Clay." The brunette whined, his head setting itself down on the hard wood of the table.

Now Clay knew that was a lie. Karl hardly felt any sense of unease when it came to social settings. If he remembers correctly, he was sure Karl was the one who came up to him first asking for an attempt at friendship. So why was it that the brunette suddenly just lost that all or nothing attitude? Especially with someone like Nick, the biggest geek Clay had ever known.

"I don't believe that for a second but okay." Clay decided to drop it because he knew he'll find out the true reason eventually. Karl seemed to like that, peeking out from his position to look back up at Clay. "So am I just supposed to sit here and be moral support or what?" The youngest asked, getting a nod from the eldest. "Yeah, I feel like if there was someone here that both he and I know, then maybe we'll be able to strike up a comfortable conversation." The brunette seemed set in this belief system, eyes scanning every corner of the slightly empty library. "Psychology and what not." Clay seemed to buy it well enough. "Do you even know if he's going to show up?" The blond asked. Nick was known for being a heavy sleeper, so for him to be awake before six that didn't benefit his grades in some way was a very rare sight.

A small gasp was heard next to Clay, green eyes shooting over to the older man who seemed frozen in his position. Curious, the younger looked over to match the other's field of vision. To his surprise, in the front doors of the library stood his best friend, dressed in somewhat presentable clothing for the time of the day. Over his shoulder, his backpack sat comfortably and was supported by the vice like grip his hand on the strap. Clay could tell that the other man was in a whole nother world, but he couldn't tell if it was because of the early hour or the possibility of certain green plants the brunette fancied. Similar to what Karl was doing before, Nick was scanning the library in hopes of spotting his intended visitor. When his eyes landed on Karl's, a small smile was growing on his face. His feet moved on their own, walking towards Karl with a sense of urgency that the blond had never seen from his best friend. He was pretty sure Nick hadn't even noticed that he was there with Karl, not acknowledging the second body near the brunette until he got closer.

Brown eyes widened with recognition as Nick stared at Clay, slowing down the pace he had set on his way to the table. Once he was close enough, he pointed to his buddy. "What are you doing here?" The tone Nick had used wasn't supposed to come off as accusatory, at least that's what Clay wanted to believe. His best friend did have a tendency to be a bit harsh, even to him. Clay's lips formed a pout as he looked up at Nick, eyes widening slightly despite the exhaustion weighing his lids down. "What, are you not happy to see me?" The blond mumbled, playing up the hurt puppy facade. The fashion major seemed to enjoy that, small giggles escaping his lips as he listened on. Clay didn't miss the way Nick's eyes softened in the direction of the other man.

Interesting.

"When have I ever been happy to see you?" The youngest shot back, ignoring the possible comeback the blond had to give his entire attention to Karl. "I didn't know you knew Clay." Clay noticed that Nick's tone had softened quite considerably when referring to the fashion major, something Nick hardly did for anyone now that Clay thought about it. Karl shrugged off the

question, as if it was no big deal. "Yeah we have a few classes together. I didn't know you guys were close either." The provided back, Clay's eyes catching the way Karl's leg started bouncing beneath the table. Nick let out a quiet laugh, his entire body turning to face Karl, offering him all of his attention as humanly possible. "Yeah, Clay's been clinging off of me since like second grade or whatever." The youngest hummed, not even gesturing to the man in question. Clay could tell that Karl's laugh in response to Nick's anecdote did something to the comp sci student.

The conversation between the two brunettes soon went stagnant, a form of tension being formed in the space between when Clay just happened to be placed in the middle of. What was all this nervous energy over a computer payment needed for? Clay's eyes shot between the two of them, picking up on the tiniest of movements between both men. He didn't know much about Karl's nervous habits, but he knew Nick's like the back of his hands. The hand that was not occupied with keeping a backpack secure to his body was clenching into a small fist before being released into an open fist. The fore finger and thumb of the hand on his bag strap was picking at a stray thread of stitching, his bottom lip was sucked in slightly as he just stared at the older man.

Clay was no genius, but he knew what attraction looked like. And using simple math, or the only math he could physically comprehend; nervous habits plus googly eyes equal infatuation. As if he hit the jackpot, Clay's eyes shot open in realization.

Oh.

He wasn't invited here for comfortability reasons.

He was invited as a wingman.

Holy shit...

The blond almost wanted to *laugh* at how ridiculous his current situation was. He was called before the sun had time to open its eyes to help his classmate and childhood buddy get it on. If you told yesterday Clay that this would be his future, he'd probably be too drunk to comprehend anything you just said to him, but he'd still laugh hysterically at the thought of it.

He was suddenly pulled out of his own thoughts with a slight kick to his ankle. He let out a hiss as he reached down to find the culprit of his current pain. His eyes shot over to Karl, who was the only one near him to do such a thing. The older brunette's face seemed expressionless, yet his eyes screamed for some sort of help. Jade eyes shot over to his best friend, who was now avoiding any sort of eye contact with the boy before him. Clay never suppressed the urge to sigh harder in his life.

He better be the best man at their damn wedding for all the strings he's about to pull.

"Five years is a pretty long time, don't you think?"

Clay questioned the man in front of him, sat across from him in the shade provided by the patio's umbrella. Lunch scraps sat on their plates as the men enjoyed their time with one another. It had been quite a bit before the two got together, their work schedules just clashed with one another's too much to fit in just a boy's day.

"Extremely. I'm shocked Karl isn't tired of me yet." Nick snickered, drumming his fingers against the wooden table top. "Also, it hasn't been five years yet. Tomorrow marks that milestone. He could break it off in the next ten minutes for all I know." The brunette rolled his eyes, the joke slipping out of his lips with far too much ease.

Clay's gentle smile dropped slightly. He knew the joke was laced with some sort of truthful doubt from his friend. Nick always doubted that someone wanted to stay around him more than necessary, and despite having an extremely loyal boyfriend who is still very much in love with him, those thoughts continued to transpire almost daily. And almost daily did Clay reassure his friend that his partner wasn't leaving any time soon, and Karl would seal those promises with a kiss once he got word of the upheaval. "He's not going to do that Nick. He loves you too much for that." Clay hummed, reaching for his cup to take a sip from the water downed fizzy drink. "How much do you think he loves me?" The youngest questioned, looking up at the blond.

Now the English major didn't expect this. Usually he just said one to two encouraging things and Nick was convinced, he was not ready for a follow up question. "Uh...well not just everyone stays in five year relationships and still blushes whenever their partner calls them pretty. Or laughs at the same stupid pun day after day." Nick rolled his eyes with a small pout. "My puns are naturally funny." Clay dead stared at the youngest, shaking his head once without an ounce of mercy. "Karl laughs at your jokes like he's still has a dumb crush on you. He knows your favorite everything and is able to tell you're upset by the way your finger moves. He still calls you gross and stupid pet names—"

"Sappy nappy isn't stupid and gross—" Nick intervened, but Clay just kept going. "He stays up late every night, waiting for your car to pull into the driveway, just so you two go to bed together. He refers to y'all's cats as your guys' kids. Nick, this man is not only deeply in love with you, but he's also down bad." Clay finally finished, setting his drink down as his full attention was now on Nick once more. He could see the gears turning around in his head, trying to process what he was just told. "That's just from me being your third wheel. I have zero clue what you guys do when I'm not around, but I'm pretty sure it's just like that if not, grosser." Nick's facial expression had softened significantly, a light breath being taken from his lips. "Yeah...yeah I'm convinced. You're right, Karl isn't tired of me..." He verbally affirmed Clay's words, a smile presenting itself again.

Clay's heart warmed. "What's with this mass amount of suspicion? You usually don't go off the deep end with this type of thinking, at least you haven't done that in years." The blond asked, arms crossing over his chest. His eyes studied the way Nick's body froze in mild thought, searching for the words to convey all that was going through his mind. When he didn't get an answer, Clay pressed on. "Are you and Karl having a falling out?" He asked softly.

Nick's head shook, dark brown curls flopping over his eyes as he did. "No...". Well that was an answer, but it cleared up literally nothing. Clay searched his brain for another possible reason, his eyes shooting wide open at the one that came to mind.

"Are you cheating on Karl?" He whisper yelled at the brunette, the words and actions themselves spooking the younger man. "What?! No of course not, why the hell were you thinking that?" Nick exclaimed, totally not drawing any attention to the two men. "Well I don't know! You weren't exactly being clear with why you wanted confirmation about Karl's love so I just—" The blond was going off before Nick cut him off once again.

"Jesus Christ, Clay. I'm going to ask Karl to marry me!"

The air between them got extremely quiet, both men staring at each other with wild expressions ranging from different emotions. The words settled amongst the both of them before they stuck.

Clay eyes blinked almost robotically, the shock of the other's words hitting dead in the face. "You're doing what now?" Clay asked once his mouth was functional. Nick played with the cuff link on his suit, looking everywhere but the blond man before him. "I said I'm going to ask Karl to marry me. You know...like marriage...weddings...husbands..." The younger mumbled, not meeting his friend's gaze. To be fair, the gaze he was given wasn't the most sane looking one, but he was still being looked at. "When is this happening?" Clay was full of questions, allowing his brain to grasp onto everything it could.

"Tomorrow." Nick answered.

"And you're just telling me now?! Dude!" Clay now felt like he was being swindled. There was no way his best friend was gonna hide something like *this* from him. "I'm sorry! I didn't know how to bring it up. I didn't want to text you and say "hey i think i might propose to my boyfriend on our anniversary" like that's just rude!" The two men did not care about their volume level at this point. "So you decided to not tell me instead??"

Clay threw his hands up in the air, watching as Nick froze mid motion as he was caught in his careless thinking. "Okay so maybe I just forgot to mention it..." Nick's story was now just changing half way through this. Clay wanted to reach over and choke the living shit out of his buddy for his stupidity. "Karl is going to have such a stupid finance I swear to god..." The blond huffed, sliding into his chair as his hand rested on his forehead. "Listen....I honest to god forgot how big marriage proposals were for a moment. I thought you wouldn't mind being surprised like Karl." Nick shrugged, picking up his own cup to satiate his growing thirst. "Only you would say something stupid like that..." The blond mumbled.

The two had finally calmed down, initial shock of the conversation now gone and forgotten about. Instead, the feelings of happiness blossomed from the two men. "So you're finally sealing the deal? Want no other man to have Karl?" Clay teased, watching as the younger's face reddened quite a bit. "Well basing off what you say...I'm assuming he wants no other man but um, yeah. I want Karl to be all mine, and have physical items to show for it." Nick spoke quietly, looking back at Clay. "It wouldn't change much. I mean, we already have five years underneath our belt. Next to you, he's like my best friend. We already live together, we know each other's family and friends extremely well...I'm just afraid that he'll say no because of all those things." Nick admitted, hand finding its way into his dark hair. "And I know a marriage rejection isn't going to mean the end of our relationship as a whole, it'll just suck a whole bunch."

"Well I feel like you shouldn't even worry about that. I just know Karl is going to start sobbing once you start getting towards the floor." Clay chuckled, Nick's body shaking a bit in amusement. "Probably. He's an emotional wreck sometimes." The youngest hummed, looking off to the side. Clay's face softened in genuine smile, trying to offer just one more piece of advice.

"He loves you more than he loves anything else, Nick. He's going to say yes." Even though those words were a different iteration of what he's said before, he knew they were enough. Nick was simple, he just needed consistency. "We can hope. Otherwise I spent twenty thousand for nothing." The brunette muttered. "You did not just spend my annual earnings on a ring that he's only going to wear for a few months..." The blond gasped, slight disappointment settling with him as Nick gave him the answer he didn't want to hear. "Sadly, yes. But I might just keep it as our wedding ring too. It's really pretty I don't have it on me, you can see it in photos later." Nick suggested. Clay gave him a simple nod.

The blond had many feelings running through his body at this very given moment. Of course there was shock, that seemed to be the staple emotion of the two men on this Saturday lunch meetup. He didn't think bringing up his best friend's and his best friend's partner's relationship would

ultimately lead them to start speaking about an upcoming proposal. Excitement was present in the man's body, excited that he was able to witness this moment in time. He was going to watch his best friend get married to the love of his life, he didn't think he'd see the day. "Am I going to be the flower boy?" The blond blurted out of nowhere, snickering as he looked at Nick's reaction. "I haven't even thought of planning the damn thing yet, but I was thinking you'd be best man. Unless you're set on being the flower boy." Nick deadpanned. Clay smiled in return. "Flower boy sounds nice but...best man sounds even better."

A breath that Nick was unaware that he was holding was let out slowly, his body deflating in time with the lack of air. "On step out of a million finished for wedding planning." The brunette hummed, content with the answer he received. He then sat up straight again, head turning to look at the English major. "Please tell me you don't plan on coming to my wedding alone." He all but spoke, the words giving the blond major whiplash. "What? Why are you suddenly saying this?"

"Well," Nick started, leaning forward towards the other man. "it would be very sad to say the least." He winced, not missing the way Clay's face dropped. "I'm not going to nag you like you mother does but...I do find it kind of odd that I'm the first one to possibly get married out of the two of us. Not to mention have the longest relationship out of us as well. In college you were always spending good portions of the year with a little girlfriend or boyfriend, now I don't think I've seen you do anything of the sort since then." Nick mumbled, Clay expression growing more annoyed by the second. "What's so bad about not being tied down? Has the idea of being married to Karl suddenly made your head all big?" The blond huffed. Nick shrugged. "Maybe. But what has hit me in this moment is that I'm always the one talking about relationships. You have yet to mention any romantic interest, or fling, to me in years."

Nick wasn't wrong. If Clay really thought about it, he doesn't think he's been in a committed relationship in a good five to six years. He had some fun from time to time, but not nearly as much as he did in college. And he did find it weird that Nick was already ahead of him in the game of love, progressing to a stage that Clay hadn't even thought of. He wondered if he lost his spark, that or he just wasn't actively looking. In college popularity contributed to his relationships and sex habits, it wasn't hard to get anyone with his status. He must've gotten used to such a system. "Maybe I've changed, I don't know. I do work a shit ton, I barely have time to pet Patches throughout the week. I don't know I could maintain a relationship with someone if it's going to be like this." Clay admitted, picking at the skin sitting on the back of his hand. "Well...are you at least interested in someone?" Nick pressed on.

"How did this go from talking about your relationship to talking about my lack of one...." The blond asked, avoiding the question that he was being pressed on. In his mind, he felt like he already had the answer. And it may or may not be man of English heritage. "Because we always talk about my relationship...and I want to be distracted about the shit I'm going to pull tomorrow so please.." Nick pleaded, following the rolled green eyes of his buddy. "I know there is at least someone at work you have a crush on. Your school is filled with extremely attractive people." Nick continued speaking. "That's such an odd thing to say." Clay mumbled in response, refusing to meet the other man's gaze. "Well it's true. You know it is and that's why you're not looking at me."

Either Nick already knew something that Clay did not, or he was completely jumping to conclusions and just happened to jump to the right one, but he was extremely persistent on this possible work crush. It could be the fact that Clay practically lives at the school, and naturally it would make sense to find at least someone interesting there. But was Clay going to open up about the pretty boy he works with who just so happens to be the same one he texts daily? The same one that makes Clay's heart clench at simple greetings, or he spends his conference periods in a seat next to Clay's. The same pretty boy who constantly pesters him about his lack of math comprehension as he himself does calculus problems all in his head?

Clay didn't realize how his body was reacting at the thought of George, being alerted when he heard a loud "aha!" be shouted from across the table. "There is someone! Who is it?" Nick sat close on the edge of his seat as he pressed on. "I didn't say there was anyone." Clay was confused on how Nick picked up on any indication at such a thing. "Yeah but after I mentioned work and attractive people, you stopped talking. But then you got this stupid soft smile on your face so I know you had to be thinking of someone." Clay wanted to smack his best friend profusely. He hated how much he was able to read him and his body language. He also cursed his body for already reacting the way it did over the *thought* of George. "If I just tell you that I'm interested in someone will you leave me alone about it?" Clay asked, really just wanting to drop this subject. He himself was unable to describe the feelings he had towards George right now, there was no way he could properly admit them to his best friend. Nick was thinking over his answer, taking in consideration of the question he was asked. Once he was satisfied with his thought process, he replied. "Only if you promise this person is going to be more than an interest before my wedding."

Clay's face contorted to some emotion, almost a mixture of confusion and disbelief if it had to be described. "How the hell am I supposed to promise that? I don't even know if what I feel for this guy is platonic or romantic." He explained, the narrative of his best friend being incredibly unrealistic writing itself inside of his brain. "Ooooh so it's a guy? Is he pretty?" Nick questioned. Clay didn't have to think about his next answer. "Yes, very."

His words shocked himself, considering he didn't stop himself any time before he said them. It was very obvious that Nick was egging him on, and Clay would eventually fall into this rabbit hole of speaking about his feelings, yet somehow Clay and his brain didn't seem to be on the same wavelength. "How's you guys meet?" Nick followed up, Clay's hand acting like some sort of shield between the two of them. "Nope, you're not getting anything else out of me. Not until I figure out myself where this...thing is going." He didn't have to see behind his hand to know that Nick was pouting. "But...you're finally showing interest in someone for the first time in years...I wanna hear all about it." Nick was now whining. God, the emotions this man went through always gave Clay a good ole ride on the emotional roller coaster. "I never said I wasn't ever going to tell you...just let me figure it out for myself first. I just find him attractive, that's all, I hardly know anything about him."

It was the truth. Clay had only known George for a month and half at least, and all he could recall about the other was the fact that he taught computer science at the same school Clay taught English at. Despite texting each other daily, it still focused a lot about work, and if any personal matters were shared, it was always Clay who mentioned them. And he doesn't blame George, not many people were as open as Clay. But Clay could see himself waiting for the day George was. "That hasn't stopped you before," Nick sighed. "So I'm assuming you're actually trying with this guy." Clay's mind halted for a second, not expected to be hit with some unknown truth. Nick wasn't wrong in anything he just said. There have been times where Clay has dated someone a week into knowing them, the name and age quite enough to have the blond pursue romance. Those relationships never lasted long though, built solely on sexual and physical attraction does that. So if Clay really thought about it, he was trying to build a foundation for a possible relationship with George.

Damn, all it took was Nick mentioning his own relationship to bring Clay down the rabbit hole of his accidental building of one. "I think I might be..." The words were soft, like they weren't supposed to be said. "I'm taking this slower than anything else I've done." The blond continued on, looking up at Nick with widened eyes. "This is why I don't let you or Karl psychoanalyze me, you both start making me aware of the shit I am doing." Nick's lips stretched into that of a smirk, shoulders rising and dropping with nonchalance. "It was going to hit you eventually, I just sped the process up so by the time you and this guy get to a point of a personal relationship that you can skip this step." Clay wish he could say the other made his situation more complicated (though

there was hardly anything to complicate) but he couldn't find it in him to argue.

Instead he offered "This was supposed to be lunch and chat, not relationship therapy.". The blond laughed at his own joke, Nick soon following up after him. "Hey, if we didn't have relationship therapy, you wouldn't find out I was planning on getting married and I wouldn't find out you were bringing a date to the wedding." The brunette was able to chuckle out. Clay felt his eyes roll before he could stop them. "Let me get to know this guy's past before you start planning shit for my future." The words seemed aggressive, but the smile on his lips said otherwise.

On the inside, Clay was screaming. He just became aware of his own feelings via someone who doesn't know anything about the situation. He wanted to ask his brain why it was working against him, why it was wanting him to progress George and his relationship in secret, and why his brain has crowned George as the one person Clay actually wants something serious out of. There are multiple questions, about himself and about George, plaguing his brain. And he wanted answers to all of them, needed them actually.

Clay apparently wasn't the only one curious and questioning, his phone vibrating against the table with the intent to alert him. Once he turned it over, his phone highlighted the blond's most recent message.

george :)

what's your favorite food?

Chapter End Notes

hi. i know this chapter is long overdue, considering i try updating every twelve days. i'm just gonna be honest with y'all, mentally i'm not doing well. like at all so...yeah. on top of that i attend school and work a 40 hour job at seventeen so i'm just trying to get through this and whatnot. i'm also sorry if this chapter isn't as...clean i guess? i didn't want it to hit a month since the last chapter so i kind of forced myself to sit and write as much as i could that could benefit the plan i had for the story. was this chapter planned? no whatsoever. but could i think of anything else to write? nope brain is just mushed and depressed. i hope it made some sort of sense.

anyway, stepping away from the personal stuff...this story is doing hella well. the time i update chapter four, there was 5000 hits and at the time i'm updating, it almost has 10000. and i just want to thank every single one of you for checking out my story and leaving so much support here. you guys keep me motivated to write on days i physically can not. i enjoy reading your comments and everything, they make my entire day. so again, thank you so very much.

i hope you all have an amazing rest of your day wherever you are. you are all insanely fabulous individuals <3

a little author's note

Chapter Summary

just read to get a summary of what is going on

also

TW// mentions of suicide

hi, it's nia, obviously the author of "teacher's pet"

before this author's note, there has been about like five months since the previous update to this fanfic

and i'm just going to tell you that no this work has not been abandoned.

the past five months have been really difficult for me. school was still going on online and that was just...terrible. still was working a fast food job as a manger at seventeen for like 40+ hours so that was a lot of stress. home life isn't the greatest. overdosed in the early morning of my last day of junior year. currently learning that my partner has been cheating on me the majority of our relationship. you know just...a lot of shit. that usually would be inspiration enough for me to write and ignore but it's just difficult to find inspiration for a story that is supposed to be happy when you really aren't yourself, you know?

i just started my senior year and i only have like three classes to be able to graduate (that gifted kid status yes sir) but i'm currently just trying to get my life in order in order to write a new chapter for you guys. even while i was away, seeing the comments and the kudos and the hits these stories have been getting are what are wanting to make me come back. people enjoy my work and i want to continue to provide.

so....here is a little preview of the next chapter that i am writing for "teacher's pet"

i'll try to have it out as soon as possible, and for those who have waited, thank you so much for being patient and understanding.

i love you all very much! :)

-

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"Tell me something about yourself."

If George had to pick a phrase that he wished he could delete from any and everybody's set of default questions, that one sentence and every different rendition of it would be his first pick. Which in theory, is a rather stupid idea. The purpose of being a human was the process of interacting with one another, and deleting the most common phrase made to do such a thing from everyone's psyche defeated the entire purpose of it all.

That didn't mean George still didn't hate ice breakers with a burning passion.

He didn't think he needed to give anybody insight into his life except for the basic things that anybody could possess. Such as a name, an appearance, a career, an age...quite literally the basics. And despite what it seems, George wasn't against the idea of getting close to a person. Simply against the idea of allowing so many people to know way too much about him. Who knows what those people would do with that information? If it wasn't necessary information, and if the person wasn't someone George was okay with staying on such a personal level with, the Brit was well okay with staying as secluded and gated away as possible.

It's been this way for as long as he could remember. He wasn't the most sociable kid. The only time he could really remember letting loose and being silly was his time over a computer screen and drunken mishaps in university. Other than that, he kept to. He couldn't give you a reason as to why that was. It wasn't like he had some traumatic life event that made him closed off to the world. His parents divorced when he was about twelve, but that was about it. But he was the way he was before that even took place.

He just liked himself tucked away from others.

End Notes

ayo another dnf fic? not surprising. anyway depending on how well this story goes i'll continue it but who knows. if you did enjoy, don't be afraid to show your support!

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